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Masterpieces of Jain Painting

Saryu Doshi

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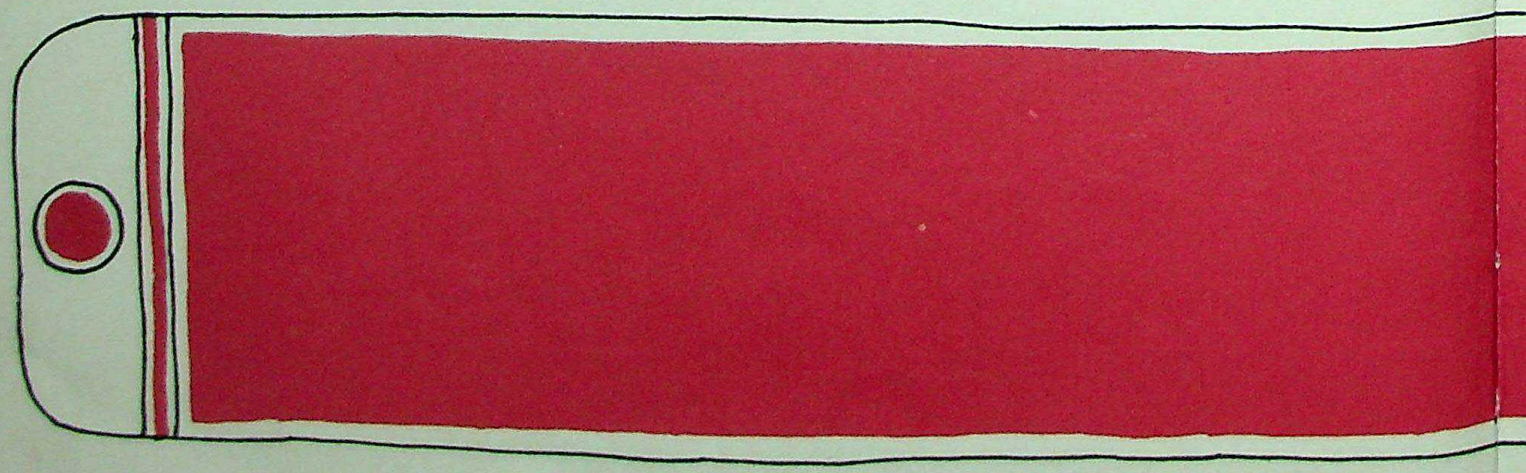

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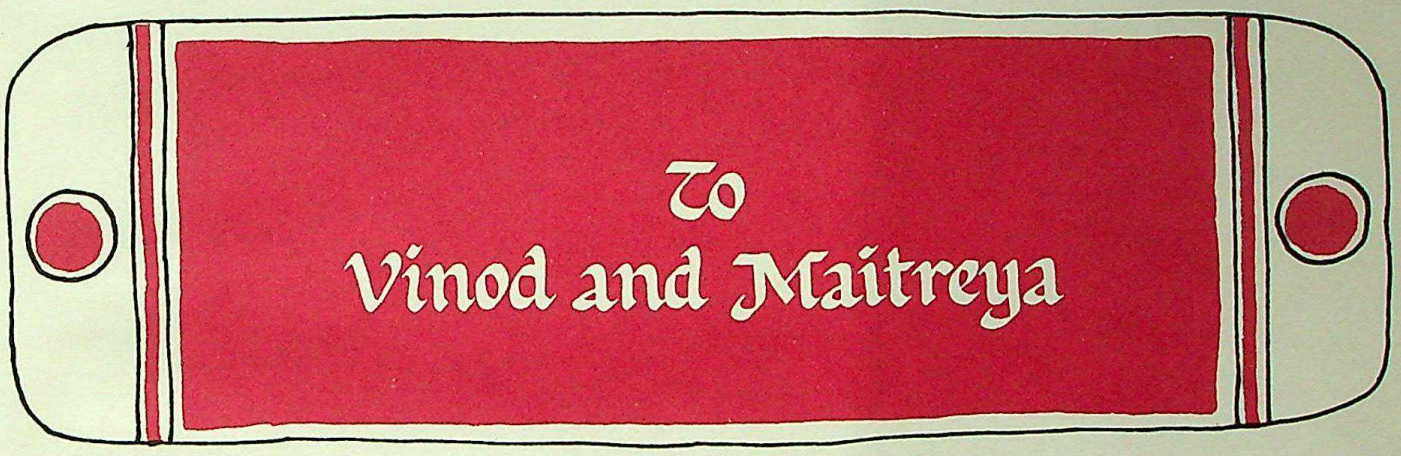

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Since ancient times the Jains have erected magnificent temples as epiphanies of their divinities. Their achievements in art and architecture are matched by their monumental accomplishments in prose and poetry. The active and prolific involvement of the Jain community in these spheres has enriched Indian culture.

This monograph highlights the special contribution of the Jains in the field of Indian Miniature Painting. The Jains fostered a tradition of manuscripts, illustrated examples of which are encountered from the eleventh century A.D. Since these objects were stored in the precincts of the temple and protected with care, a large number of them have survived while all other evidence has mostly perished. Today, they serve as precious records of the times. Most of the evidence discussed here was collected during the initial phase of my doctoral research. My visits to little-known and remotely situated Jain libraries were most rewarding as they led to other sources which resulted in the discovery of invaluable information. The exposure to Indian Art in the museums and private collections in India, Europe and the U.S.A. not only enhanced my understanding of the subject but also enabled me to include unpublished material.

The chief concern of this study is an analysis of style—the origin of a trend, its development and its extension into different areas. For the assessment of style each document was first examined for its pictorial content and compositional values with special attention to such aspects as the inter-relation between the areas devoted to the text and the paintings, the colours employed and the orchestration of elements in the composition. Thereafter, the treatment of all the motifs was systematically evaluated. The style of the manuscript was then compared with other painted documents belonging to the same region and period. As I examined this material, it became increasingly clear to me that traditions in Indian Painting did not always advance in a linear progression but operated at various levels of expression—the secular, the religious, and the folk. It was also evident that, when compared to non-hieratic art, hieratic art tended to be more conservative and inhibited. Jain Painting is basically hieratic in intent. It exhibits no preoccupation with mood or emotion. Not surprisingly, the miniatures are generally esoteric and their approach cerebral. It is in this light that I have attempted to place them in the larger context of Indian Miniature Painting.

While compiling this study I felt that an appreciation of Jain Painting would be heightened by increasing the awareness of the social and historical processes that gave rise to this tradition—of the people who commissioned this art form and the motivations that guided them. I also realised that the understanding of the subject would be facilitated if the reader was familiar with the themes that were being illustrated and with the forces that shaped the pictorial content. It is with this intention that I have included an introductory chapter on the Jain Ethos and a section of Jain Legends in this anthology. I have omitted footnotes but have included substantial bibliographical information for further reference. For those readers who may be unfamiliar with Indian words there is a glossary.

I would like to express my gratitude to my husband and the members of my family who not only encouraged me in this project but minimised my own conflicts between personal and professional obligations by extending whole-hearted cooperation and understanding.

I owe many thanks to my mentors, the late Dr. Moti Chandra and the erudite scholar Mr. Karl J. Khandalavala and His Holiness Swami Charukirtiji of Shravana Belgola. I would also like to thank Mr. Robert Skelton, Dr. Pramod Chandra and Dr. Ananda Krishna for the constructive advice given to me in the course of my research work. In matters concerned with Jain studies I have profited greatly from the learned suggestions and guidance proffered by the late Dr. A. N. Upadhya (Kolhapur), Dr. Kasturchand Kasliwal (Jaipur) and Dr. Rajaram Jain (Arrah). I am indebted to Mrs. Radhika Lalbhai (Ahmedabad), Mr. Anuj Patel (Baroda), Mr. S. Y. Madan (Bombay), Mr. D. R. Mehta (Delhi), Mr. Dayanidhi Kasliwal (Jaipur), Mr. R. J. Shah (Kolhapur), and Mr. Vishwasain (Shravana Belgola) for all the help they granted in procuring the material published here.

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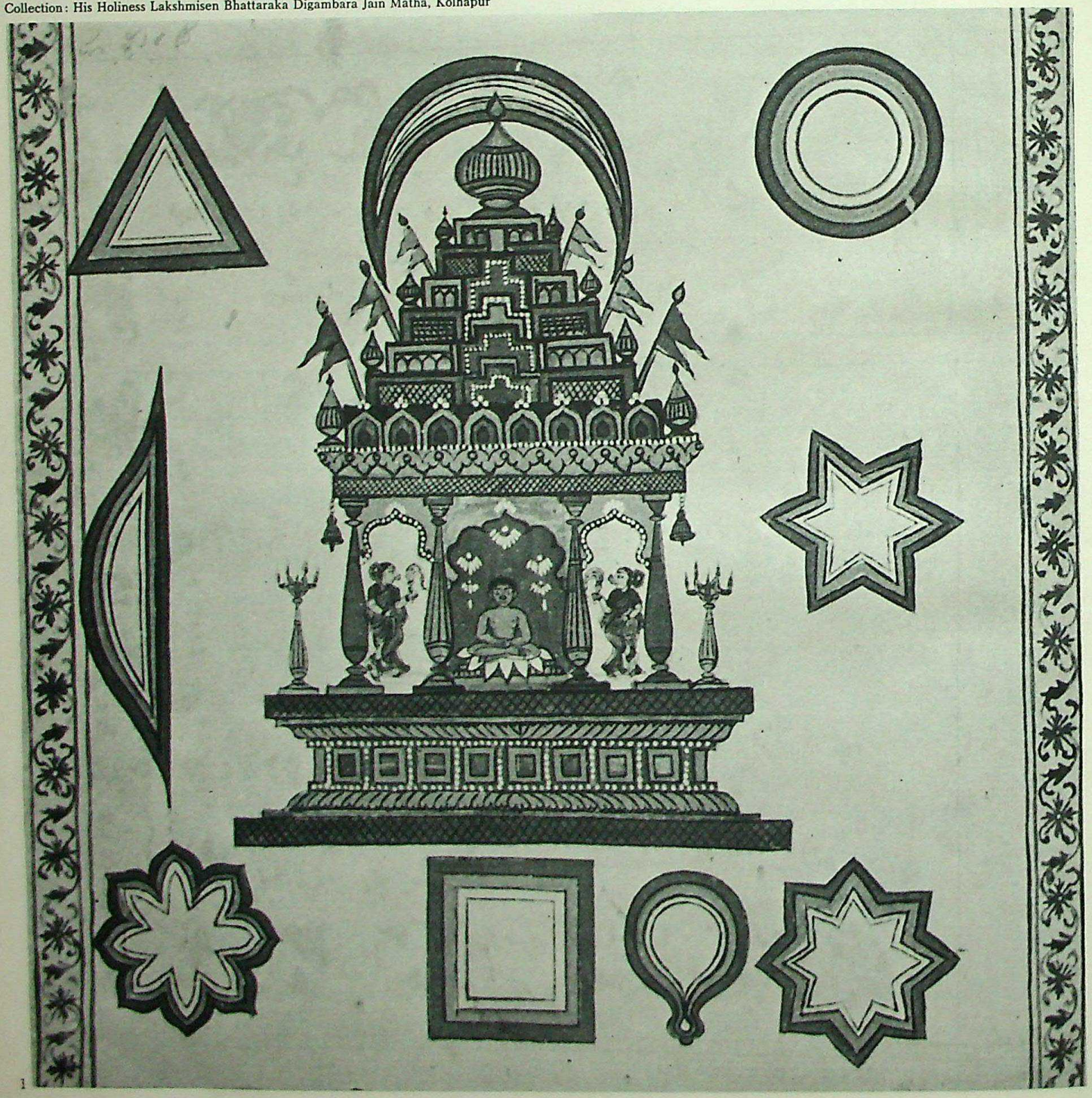

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The Jain Ethos

What am I? Where have I come from? And what am I here for?

Since the beginning of time humanity has sought answers to these troubling questions and has attempted to unravel the mysteries of creation and the cosmos through religious and metaphysical speculations. In India, several different solutions have been put forth in the form of theological and ethical systems. Among them is Jainism – one of the more ancient religions of India. This system of religious, philosophical and ethical teachings derives its name from the Sanskrit word *jina* which signifies conqueror. The designation Jina is applied to those mortals who have overpowered the world of passions and emerged as spiritual victors. The followers of the faith are known as Jains – the followers of the Jina.

Expounded by Mahavira more than twenty-five hundred years ago, Jainism belongs to the *shramana* current of Indian culture which was, in origin, non-Vedic and non-Aryan and possibly pre-Aryan. Over the centuries Jainism has evolved into a complete system of philosophy with branches of ontology, epistemology and ethics, as well as religious mythology and ritual. It has undergone a long process of development and is divided into two major sects and a number of sub-sects. Each of the two primary sects – the Shvetambara and the Digambara – has its own minor deities, monastic orders, religious leaders, sacred scriptures, rituals, festivals and fairs.

Mahavira and his Teachings

Born in the region of Magadha in the year 599 B.C., Mahavira was a slightly older contemporary of the Buddha. Both preached religions which stemmed from the *shramana* tradition. At that time, in the sixth century B.C., the Vedic religion – known also as Brahmanism – had developed into a set of complex polytheistic beliefs centered around elaborate rites conducted through the agency of Brahman priests. Jainism, like Buddhism, was reformist in character and served as an organised protest against Brahmanism. Both Jainism and Buddhism denied the efficacy of sacrifices as a form of worship, rejected the authority of Brahmanical scriptures such as the *Vedas* and the *Dharmashastras* and refused to accord divine status to the Brahmanical deities Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. In fact, the Jains and the Buddhists were atheistic in their approach; they did not believe in

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any Supreme Being nor did they accept the superiority of the Brahmanical caste. They denounced Brahmanical religious practices as not only unnecessary but also as hindrances in attaining the goal of salvation. The way to salvation, they claimed, was through self-discipline, meditation and ascetic practices.

The basic similarities between the Jain and Buddhist religions, especially the fact that Mahavira and the Buddha lived at the same time in the same region, led to much confusion and for a long time scholars were not prepared to grant a separate and independent status to the Jain religion. They paid no heed to Jain claims and tended to regard Jainism as an offshoot of Buddhism. It was only in the late nineteenth century, on the basis of information provided in Buddhist texts, that Jainism came to be accepted as a religion in its own right. Actually, Jainism is a highly original system of thought containing very ancient material, even more so than Buddhism. The two religions, though similar in approach, evolved along different lines and gathered a vast number of followers. But Jainism, unlike Buddhism, never spread beyond the frontiers of India. Its hold over its adherents in India, however, continued to be strong throughout the ages and it was able, therefore, to successfully counter the disruptive forces of the Hindu Revivalists. Buddhism, on the other hand, could not withstand these pressures and consequently disappeared from the land of its origin. Jainism, though restricted to a minority, continues to be a living tradition in India today.

Jain Dogma

The Jain philosophical system is pragmatic in its approach; it neither demands unquestioning faith nor is greatly at variance with everyday life. More than a religion, Jainism is an ethical doctrine with rigorous self-discipline as its core. It recognises no Almighty God nor a Supreme Being but only Tirthankaras – those enlightened ones, each of whom was "originally a man like other men, and who nevertheless, by his own power, has attained omniscience and freedom, and who out of pity for suffering mankind teaches it the way to salvation that he has found." Since the Jains do not believe in a Supreme God they do not depend on 'divine grace' to attain salvation but attempt instead to achieve it through individual initiative and effort.

According to Mahavira, life on earth is painful because the soul is caught in the unending process of birth, death and rebirth. The ultimate goal of every being therefore is to seek emancipation from this wretched condition and the way to liberation lies in following the path of Three Jewels (*ratnatraya*): *samyag darshan, samyag jnana* and *samyag charitra*. This can be done through a proper grasp of the seven fundamental dogmas underlying the metaphysical aspects of the Jain religion. These are *jiva, ajiva, ashraya, bandha, samvara, nirjara* and *moksha*. The first two constitute the Concept of Duality and the remaining five represent the Theory of Karmic Bondage.

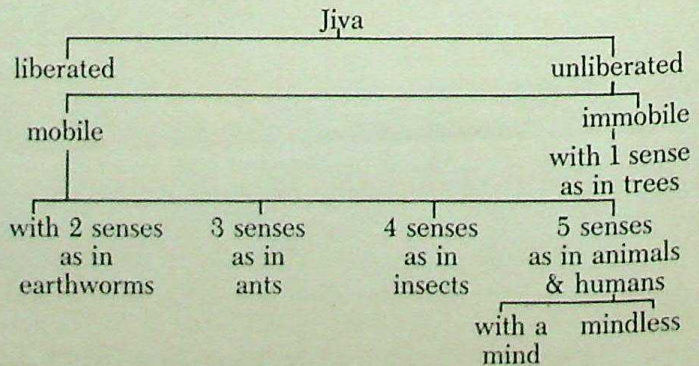
Concept of Duality:

The Jains believe that the universe consists of two coexisting elements – *jiva* (soul) and *ajiva* (matter) which are unrelated and everlasting. Every being possesses soul and matter – the latter constituting the physical aspect of the being.

The soul differs from matter because it is characterised by *chetana*. The soul is eternal; it cannot be perceived by the senses and can be known only through inference and introspection. The soul does not have a fixed size; at any given time it is equal in extent to the body it occupies. With each new birth it undergoes a change in its dimensions, expanding and contracting to fit the body it is to inhabit "like the flame of a lamp whose light can fill a small room or a large hall." By virtue of this quality the soul can range in size from the smallest atom to the whole universe. In its pristine state it is pure, perfect and radiant. It is the soul that experiences the fruit of *karma*.

Matter has both form and formlessness. Its form is made up of *pudgala* – elements which are perceptible to touch and possess taste, colour and smell. Its formless aspect comprises qualities that define the shape of its body, produce physical changes such as aging, and give it motion or keep it static.

According to Jain beliefs the soul can be categorised into any of two types: the *siddha*, that has successfully freed itself from the Cycle of Rebirth or the *samsarin jiva* that is enmeshed in the Cycle of Rebirth. Whenever the unliberated soul appears on earth it is born either mobile or immobile. Every immobile soul is born with only one sense – that of touch. Every mobile soul possesses, in addition to the sense of touch, one or more of the remaining four senses – taste, sight, smell and hearing. It is further graded according to the number of senses it possesses.



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Theory of Karmic Bondage:
The Jains believe that from the beginning of time, the *jiva* has been tied to *ajiva* and this bondage is responsible for the continued circling of the soul in the Cycle of Rebirth. The fetters that lock the soul to matter are caused by *karma,* and the moment it is destroyed the soul is liberated from matter.

What is *karma*? Unlike other religions Jainism does not define *karma* as work or deed but as subtle matter or particles which exist everywhere – the whole cosmic atmosphere is full of these particles. *Karma* matter is imperceptible and possesses the special property of penetrating the soul and clouding it just as ink stains water. *Karma* matter enters the soul through the various activities of mind, body and speech. This influx is known as *ashraya* and occurs all the time. Virtuous acts produce good *karma* (*punya*) while sinful activities cause bad *karma* (*papa*). It is important to note that *punya* does not cancel *papa* but both continue to add to the *karma* burden of the soul: "just as grains of sand will fill a bag and weigh it down," so *karma* matter keeps the soul in *samsara.*

Karma matter does not only penetrate the soul but also wraps itself around it and forms *karmanasharira.* The size and density of *karma* determines the form that the soul will assume in its forthcoming birth. Furthermore the *jiva* itself is not devoid of certain *kashyas* such as greed, anger, pride and deceit. These passions are inherent to it and cause the incoming *karma* matter to adhere to the soul and amalgamate with it "as heat can unite with iron and water with milk." This process is known as *bandha.*

The deeds, good and bad, after they have been experienced by the soul, result in the discharge of *karma* matter. If this process were to continue uninterruptedly then all the *karma* matter would eventually be expurgated from the soul. Unfortunately, this is never possible because while a being is annihilating old *karma* matter, it is, at the same time, attracting new *karma* matter through different actions of mind and body. The exercise of expiating old *karma* and admitting new *karma* goes on simultaneously and forces the soul to remain chained to the Cycle of Rebirth.

Since emancipation from this endless process of birth and rebirth can be achieved only through an active annihilation of all existing *karma,* the religion advocates its dissipation through a procedure in two stages. The first stage is *samvara,* the stoppage of all channels through which *karma* flows into the soul. This can be achieved through rigorous self-control and freedom from worldly attachments by isolating and occupying oneself with meditation. Once the ingress of *karma* has been plugged, then begins the second stage – *nirjara* – of burning up the past *karma* in the blaze of *tapas* till the *karmabij* is destroyed. When this occurs, the soul, released from its fetters, immediately reverts to its original state of pure perfection and attains *moksha.* It then ascends to the apex of the universe where it dwells as *siddha* "without feeling, without form, without birth, without death, enjoying an endless unbroken calm."

The Anekanta Attitude:
An extremely sophisticated doctrine in Jain philosophy is that of *anekantavada* which states that reality is multi-faceted. This tenet has two components: *nayavada* and *syadvada.* The former declares that any one thing can be perceived from many points of view, that these various points of view are relative, and that insistence on any one as the only and absolute point of view is inconsistent with reality. *Syadvada* deals with the different points of view from which reality can be observed in a comprehensive manner. Essentially, it underlines the distinct possibility of reconciling apparent contradictions in any whole. To illustrate this theory the Jains cite the famous parable of the six blind men who came across an elephant. Each of them touched it in order to determine what it was. The one who touched the animal's side said it was a wall, while he who felt the animal's leg thought it was a pillar. The third held the trunk and called it a branch. The fourth blind man stroked the tail and said it was a rope, while the fifth passed his hand over the ear and believed it to be a winnowing fan. The last one happened to touch the tusk and was convinced it was a pointed weapon. Each was sure of his own surmise and labelled that of the others as false. As they quarrelled, a person appeared and listened to their respective opinions. He informed them that each was correct in his surmise but that in order to come to a conclusion about the whole, they needed to synthesise their individual experiences. The understanding and acceptance of *anekantavada* has enabled the Jains to respect other religions.

Antiquity of Jainism
The Jains maintain that their religion is timeless and has been revealed again and again by countless teachers known as Tirthankaras – those who show the way to salvation. The term Tirthankara literally means "the one who builds the fords by which to cross *samsara,*" by forming the four-fold religious order of monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen. Forty-eight Tirthankaras are born in every cosmic cycle which, according to the Jains, is like a pendulum that swings back and forth. Its movement has neither a beginning nor an end. The downward swing represents the *avasarpini* era during which conditions on earth gradually deteriorate from utmost happiness to extreme unhappiness. The upward turn represents the *utsarpini* era with steadily improving conditions – from extreme unhappiness towards utmost happiness.

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In every cosmic cycle twenty-four Tirthankaras are born during the downward course and twenty-four during the upward swing. Mahavira was the last Tirthankara of the *avasarpini* era in the current cosmic cycle. The Jains state—and there is textual evidence to support their claim—that the Tirthankara preceding Mahavira, Parshva, was an actual historical figure who lived and taught in Banaras in the ninth century B. C. The antiquity of the Jain religion can be traced back to the twenty-second Tirthankara who lived in the region of Mount Girnar in Saurashtra, and was a contemporary and a clansman of Krishna. But thereafter the history of the religion shades off into legends and myths.

The interval of time between the twenty-fourth and twenty-third, as well as between the twenty-third and twenty-second Tirthankaras appears to be approximately two or three centuries. And if this period of time is an indication of the time-span that separated each Tirthankara from the one who preceded him, then the date of the first Tirthankara of the current cosmic cycle can be set sometime in the seventh or eighth millenium B. C. which may have coincided with the genesis of the Indian Civilisation. In fact, the Jains regard this first Tirthankara, Rishabha, as the founder of the Indian Civilisation. They believe that he created a social organisation and taught his children the various arts and crafts as well as the science of numbers and the art of writing. When he became disenchanted with the mundane pleasures of worldly existence he sought spiritual peace by becoming a homeless mendicant monk, spending his time in penance and austerities. After attaining omniscience he created a religious order with four segments—monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen—and established a code of religious conduct. Because he set up a religious order he is known as a Tirthankara and is distinct from and superior to other *kevalins* and *siddhas*. It may be added here that the Hindu *Purana, Shrimad Bhagavata* elaborately records the life of Rishabha and describes him as the eighth incarnation of Vishnu. Therein he is attributed with the creation of a new type of religion based on detachment and total control of the emotions and senses.

The Jains do not regard Rishabha or any other Tirthankara as the founder of their religion because they believe it to be timeless. To them, Tirthankaras are the propagators of a truth and a path that has already been revealed by an established set of teachings. These teachings are not manifested through magical powers (as the *Vedas* are supposed to be) nor received through divine grace. It is the human soul, aided by an inherent knowledge, that comes to know the truth. Each Tirthankara reanimates the imperishable Jain tradition. As the order created by one Tirthankara fades it is recreated by the next.

According to Jain sources, Mahavira's parents were followers of the *Nirgrantha* religion preached by the twenty-third Tirthankara, Parshva. Mahavira too, was raised to believe in it. Parshva's religion was known as *Chaturyama Dharma* as it enjoined restraint from four sorts of activities: injury, non-truthfulness, taking what is not given, and possession. Mahavira preached the same principles, those of *ahimsa, satya, asteya* and *aparigraha*. He, however, added a fifth vow—that of *brahmacharya*. This was a departure from earlier teachings which considered celibacy to be an aspect of the vow of *aparigraha*. Mahavira also drew a distinction in the levels at which these five vows were to be observed: at a higher level they were known as *mahavrata* to be practised by the ascetics and at a lower level they were called *anuvrata*. The *anuvrata* were less severe and designed primarily for the Jain laity. Thus the vows were and still are the same for the lay votaries as well as the ordained persons; they differ only in the degree of strictness advocated in their observance.

Despite the stress on severe discipline of both mind and body, Mahavira's teachings appealed to the people, and at the time of his death in 527 B. C. the Jain following consisted of 14,000 monks, 36,000 nuns, 159,000 laymen and 318,000 laywomen.

The Schism

After Mahavira's death, eleven *ganadharas* propagated his teachings. The faith was promulgated orally, and, for the next few hundred years, the religious and philosophical dogmas were handed down from preceptor to disciple.

The dangers inherent in the system of oral transmission became apparent in the fourth century B. C. when a disastrous famine ravaged the region of Magadha. Just prior to this event Acharya Bhadrabahu could foretell, from certain prognostic signs, that a calamity was imminent and he decided to migrate southwards. A large number of followers accompanied him. Of the monks who chose to remain in Magadha many died of starvation and, with them, the knowledge of Mahavira's teachings was irretrievably lost. Matters became even worse when the Jain community realised that malnutrition had seriously impaired the retentive powers of the surviving monks. The knowledge of the Jain religion was fast diminishing and to salvage it from total oblivion, the Jains convened a Council of Monks at Pataliputra. In this council, under the leadership of Monk Sthulabhadra, the disordered Jain canon received systematic codification.

Twelve years later the monks who had migrated to the south with Acharya Bhadrabahu returned to their homeland and were appalled by the laxity that characterised the attitude of their brethren. The Magadhan monks had resorted to the use of clothing and this, according to the recently returned

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monks from the south, was a gross violation of the fifth tenet of non-possession. It was therefore unacceptable to them. Equally unacceptable was the recension of the Jain canon compiled at Pataliputra because of the many inaccuracies and discrepancies contained in it. These and several other points of contention resulted in sharp disagreements between the two factions leaving no room for compromise. The group from the south not only declared the canon compiled at Pataliputra heretical, but also proclaimed themselves as the true Jains—the Mula Sangha. The community was split into two sects: those who were more conservative and staunch advocates of nudity for Jain ascetics formed the Digambara (sky-clad) sect and those who preferred to use clothing grouped themselves into the Shvetambara (clothed in white) sect. The two traditions separated and from the first century A. D., have evolved along parallel lines, each retaining its own identity.

The differences between the two sects are not confined merely to interpretations of a doctrinal nature. Even the account of how the division of the Jain community came about varies in both traditions. The Digambara sect maintains that Acharya Bhadrabahu migrated to South India with his royal disciple Chandragupta Maurya and twelve thousand followers. When this group reached the place now known as Shravana Belgola, Bhadrabahu, sensing that his end was near, decided to remain there. He ordered his followers to proceed without him; only Chandragupta Maurya stayed back to take care of his preceptor. Bhadrabahu died at Shravana Belgola while performing the austerities prescribed for *sallekhana*. The Digambara tradition claims that when the followers of Bhadrabahu returned to Magadha after twelve years in the south, they discovered many aberrations in the compilation of the Jain canon as well as in the conduct of the monks. These differences led to dissensions which

	Shvetambara		Digambara	
Tirthankara	**Colour**	**Cognizance**	**Colour**	**Cognizance**
1. Rishabha	gold	bull	yellow	bull
2. Ajita	gold	elephant	yellow	elephant
3. Sambhava	gold	horse	yellow	horse
4. Abhinandana	gold	monkey	yellow	monkey
5. Sumati	gold	curlew	yellow	curlew
6. Padmaprabha	red	red lotus	red	red lotus
7. Suparshva	gold	*svastika*	green (or blue)	*svastika*
8. Chandraprabha	white	crescent moon	white (or black)	crescent moon
9. Pushpadanta	white	*makara*	white	*makara* (or crab)
10. Shitala	gold	*shrivatsa*	yellow	*shrivatsa* (or pipal tree)
11. Shreyamsa	gold	rhinoceros	yellow	rhinoceros (or garuda)
12. Vasupupujya	red	buffalo	red	buffalo
13. Vimala	gold	boar	yellow	boar
14. Ananta	gold	falcon	yellow	ram (or bear)
15. Dharma	gold	thunderbolt (or mace)	yellow	thunderbolt
16. Shanti	gold	antelope	yellow	antelope
17. Kunthu	gold	goat	yellow	goat
18. Ara	gold	*nandyavarta*	yellow	fish
19. Malli	blue (or green)	water-jar	yellow	water-jar
20. Munisuvrata	black	tortoise	black (or blue)	tortoise
21. Nami	gold	blue lotus	yellow	blue (or red) lotus (or *ashoka* tree)
22. Arishtanemi	black	conch	black (or blue)	conch
23. Parshva	green (or blue)	serpent	green (or blue)	serpent
24. Mahavira	gold	lion	yellow	lion

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culminated in the division of the community. Certain other Digambara sources, however, do not place the great schism in Pataliputra but in Ujjain. They also indicate that the final division into the two sects occurred in Vallabhi in Gujarat in the sixth century A. D., when the monks wearing a loincloth were required by the local kings to become fully clothed in white garments. The Shvetambara tradition reveals many departures from that of the Digambaras. It claims that Acharya Bhadrabahu did not go to the south but was in Nepal at the time of the famine in Magadha. The Shvetambaras also believe that the schism into Shvetambara and Digambara took place in A. D. 82 when an order of naked monks was established by Shivakotti of Rathavirapura, and members of this order became the first sky-clad monks.

In the last two thousand years no doctrinal accommodation has taken place between the Shvetambara and Digambara sects: both sects have developed their own distinctive literary traditions and legends. These differences become most apparent in the biographical descriptions of Mahavira provided by the two sects. Both accounts purport to narrate the events that took place in the life of a known historical figure and yet are at variance with one another and contain several contradictions. These conflicting versions are very revealing inasmuch as they bring into focus the areas of disagreement between the two sects as well as their implications in social and religious practices.

Biographical Accounts of Mahavira

Although the Jain scriptures attest that a Tirthankara is a human being, born of human parents, the Jain laity regards him as a superhuman personage. In fact, all Jains believe that a person can be born as a Tirthankara only as the result of a special kind of *karma*—the *Tirthankaranama-karma*—which endows the Tirthankara with an excellent mind and body: a physique with an adamantine quality so as to withstand the rigours of intense meditation and severe austerities, and a mind which at birth possesses three kinds of knowledge—*mati-jnana*, *shruta-jnana* and, lastly, *avadhi-jnana* which enables him to perceive objects and events at great distances. The *Tirthankaranama-karma* ensures that the Tirthankara is born in an aristocratic Kshatriya family; that a fixed set of supernatural occurrences—the *panchakalyanaka*—mark his career; that he obtains *mahaparyaya-jnana* as soon as he renounces the world (*diksha*) and that he needs no guru but is *swayambuddha*. Upon attaining *kevala-jnana*, he preaches his religion and sets up a religious order. Finally, at the end of his life, the Tirthankara sheds his mortal remains and ascends to the very apex of the universe—*siddhashila*.

The Digambara and Shvetambara texts agree that Mahavira, the twenty-fourth Tirthankara of this era, was born in 599 B. C. in Kundagrama, a large city in the region of Magadha. His father, King Siddhartha, was a Kshatriya and belonged to the Jnatra clan. His mother, Queen Trishala, was the sister of Chetak, the ruler of Vaishali. Mahavira's life, like that of every Tirthankara before him, was marked by five auspicious events: *garbha, janma, diksha, kevala-jnana* and *moksha*. Celestial beings descended on earth to celebrate each event.

Conception:

In their descriptions of this event in Mahavira's life, the Digambara and Shvetambara traditions diverge widely.

The Digambara sources state that at the time of conception, Trishala saw sixteen auspicious dreams: (1) a white elephant (2) a white bull (3) a lion (4) Shri, the goddess of beauty (5) a pair of fragrant floral garlands (6) the full moon (7) the rising sun (8) a large flag (9) a precious vase filled with water (10) a lotus lake (11) the Ocean of Milk (12) a celestial abode (13) a heap of jewels (14) a crackling smokeless fire (15) a lofty throne and (16) a pair of fish sporting in the lake. These dreams indicated that Mahavira was destined to become either a universal monarch or a great saint.

The Shvetambara texts state that the twenty-fourth Tirthankara was originally conceived in the womb of Devananda, the wife of Brahman Rishabhadatta. When Shakra (Indra), the king of the gods, discovered this, he was nonplussed as it was ordained that a Tirthankara must be born in the Kshatriya caste since only a member of the warrior caste could become a monarch—be it in the sphere of temporal or spiritual matters. Immediately he arranged for the transfer of the Tirthankara's embryo from the womb of the Brahman mother to that of Trishala who was a Kshatriya queen and for the transfer of the embryo in Trishala's womb to that of Devananda. It would appear from this episode that the Jain tradition, like the Buddhist, did not acknowledge the higher status of the Brahmans in the caste hierarchy. Actually, they considered them lowly since they depended on gifts from others for their living. The episode of the exchange of the embryos is often treated as the sixth auspicious event in Mahavira's life. It does not occur in the Digambara texts; in fact they reject it altogether.

In the Shvetambara texts, the conception of Mahavira is also accompanied by auspicious dreams. However, in their tradition, only fourteen dreams occur when any Tirthankara is born—the first fourteen described in the list of the Digambara tradition. These dreams appeared twice in the case of Mahavira. They first occurred when Devananda, the wife of Brahman Rishabhadatta, conceived Mahavira in her womb. Later, when Harinegameshi—the goat-headed commander of Shakra's celestial infantry—under instructions

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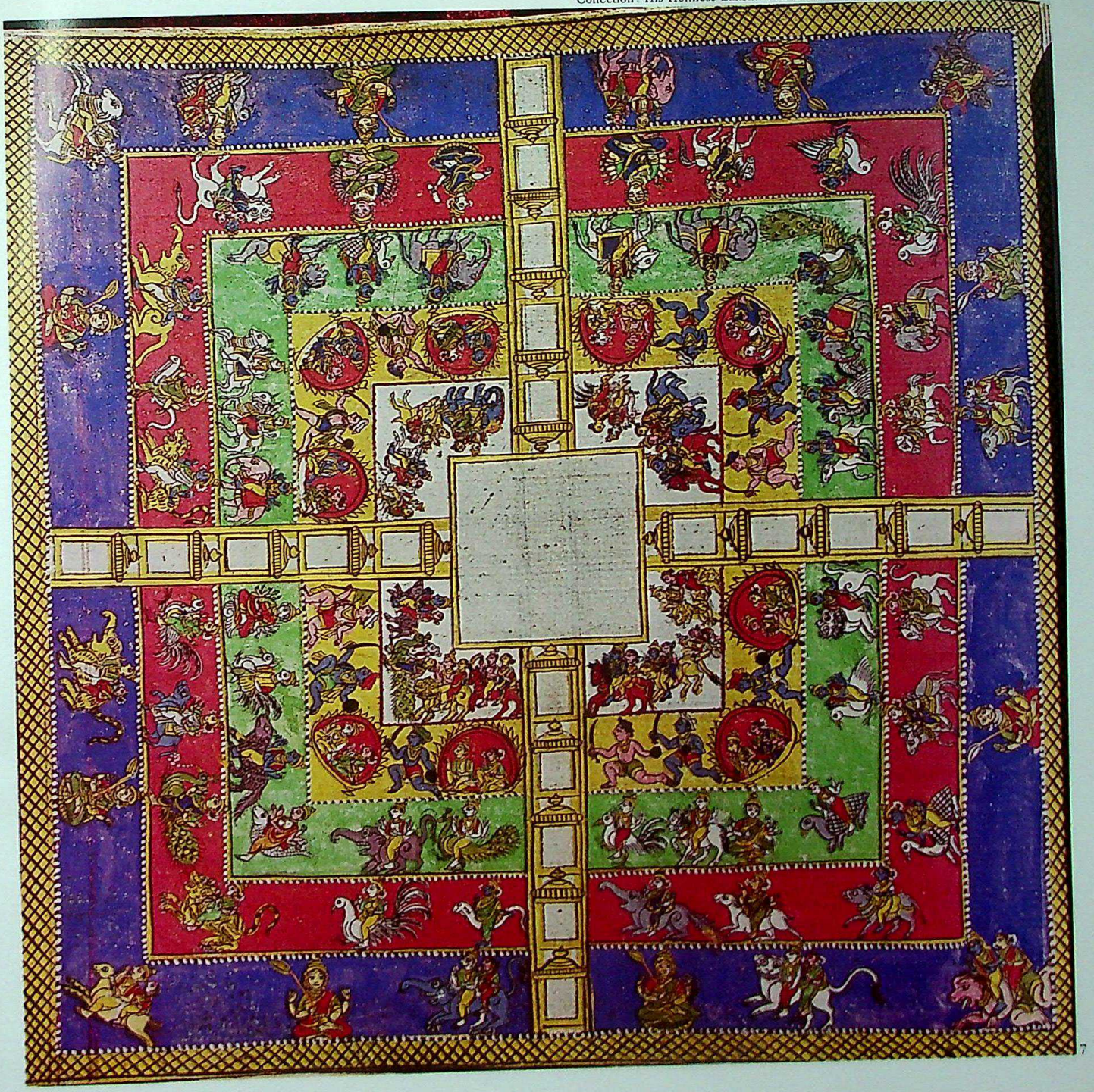

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from Shakra carried out the exchange of embryos and placed the Tirthankara's embryo in Trishala's womb, she too witnessed the fourteen lucky dreams.

The Shvetambara tradition goes on to relate how the little Mahavira, even when in the womb, showed an awareness of the principle of non-violence. For, in his concern for his mother, he lay completely still lest his movements should cause her any pain. Only when he realised, through his clairvoyant knowledge, that his mother, feeling no movement, feared that the embryo had withered, did he stir slightly to reassure her that he was well. At that moment it occurred to him that parental concern could turn into anguish very quickly and he decided not to take *diksha* as long as his parents were alive.

The Digambaras, again, differ with the Shvetambaras when they point out that Mahavira did not wait until his parents had passed away to adopt the spiritual path but solicited and received his parent's permission to take *diksha*.

Birth and Early Life:

The Digambara as well as Shvetambara sources contain glowing descriptions of how celestial beings and mortals celebrated the birth of Mahavira. They say that Shakra descended from heaven and carried the child to the summit of Mount Meru for his lustration. According to the Digambaras, Shakra, after putting Queen Trishala to sleep with a magical spell, took the infant Mahavira in a grand procession to Mount Meru where he and other celestial beings performed the lustration rites. The Shvetambaras' account varies slightly; according to their texts, Shakra came down on earth and cast a spell on the queen, inducing deep slumber. He then laid a false Mahavira by her side and replicated himself into five selves: one self lifted the infant, the other held a parasol above him, the third and fourth stood on either side waving *chauris* and the fifth, bearing the thunderbolt, danced in front of the holy child. Then with other celestial beings, he proceeded to Mount Meru to bathe and anoint Mahavira with wonderful substances.

Both traditions, however, agree that the parents named the infant Vardhamana (increase in prosperity) because, after his conception, the family fortunes increased markedly. This was the first of the many names that the twenty-fourth Tirthankara received during his lifetime. He was also called Mahavira (the great hero), Sanmati (of excellent wisdom), Kashyapa (his lineage name) and Jnatraputra or Nataputta (his clan names).

The Shvetambara and Digambara traditions diverge in their accounts of Mahavira's life as a young man. The Digambara version narrates that until he was thirty, Mahavira led a happy, normal life. Then, for no apparent reason, he became restless, found the prospect of being a householder very dreary and longed for spiritual enlightenment. He sought and received permission from his parents to renounce the world of luxury and comfort for the life of a humble mendicant. Unmarried and celibate, he departed on his spiritual quest. The Shvetambara version contends that Mahavira, in accordance with the vow he had made while still in his mother's womb, fulfilled all his duties as a householder. He married princess Yashoda and they had a daughter named Priyadarshana. After the death of his parents, Mahavira took up the life of a mendicant monk.

Renunciation:

The act of renunciation evokes great admiration among the Jains and is a much celebrated and glorified event. At the time of Mahavira's renunciation ceremony, the Digambaras say he was dressed in costly clothes and jewels and carried in a palanquin by the gods through the city. This magnificent procession came to a halt outside the city, Mahavira stepped out of the palanquin, removed all his clothing and ornaments, sat under a holy *ashoka* tree, and pulled out his hair in five handfuls. This last act signified the renunciant's willingness to end his concern for the body, and his readiness to face the travails that awaited him on his way to achieving his objective of salvation. The act of divesting himself of clothing and accepting total nudity signalled the fact that the householder had now become a monk.

This episode is described slightly differently in the Shvetambara texts. According to them the procession bearing Mahavira's palanquin passed through the city and came to a wooded park outside it. Mahavira dismounted, removed his clothing, and undertook the six-meal fast. Then he tore out his hair in five handfuls, put on the divine robe (*devadushya*) given to him by Shakra, and became a homeless monk. At this time a Brahman came to him seeking alms and Mahavira tore his garment into two, and gave one piece away. He continued to wear the other half of the divine cloth until it got caught in a thorny bush and slipped away. Mahavira did not notice the loss or, if he did, he did not care to retrieve the garment. Thereafter he wandered about as a naked monk.

This event clearly brings into focus the central question between the Digambara and the Shvetambara traditions: can a man who wears clothing be a monk?

On this issue the Digambaras take the stand that nudity is an essential aspect of renunciation; retention of clothing is an indication of residual shame signifying a falling away from the requirement of renouncing all possessions, external as well as internal. They maintain that all Tirthankaras were sky-clad after they accepted *diksha* and the practice of nudity is mandatory for anyone who claims to be a Jain monk.

Although the Shvetambara version of Mahavira's life shows that Mahavira eventually became a nude monk, there

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is no denying the basic difference of intent between the two sects: the Digambara recension depicts Mahavira as consciously and purposefully divesting himself of clothing whereas the Shvetambara recension conveys that Mahavira wore clothes for a while, and even when he discarded clothing, the action was more a result of chance than choice. After losing his piece of clothing, Mahavira, however, did not bother to obtain another, and in a passage in the Shvetambara canon he is alleged to have said: "I uphold the practice of nudity." But neither the event nor the statement can be taken as any indication that Mahavira considered nudity as a requirement for monkhood, especially since he did not insist that his disciples dispense with clothing altogether. Although the Shvetambara scriptures mention that Rishabha, the first Tirthankara of the present cosmic era, like Mahavira, preferred the naked state, they maintain that the remaining Tirthankaras never abandoned their clad state. Indeed, some of their descriptions suggest that the Tirthankaras wore robes of variegated colour and design. These factors point towards the conclusion that the Shvetambaras tended to regard the issue of nudity for Jain monks as optional, and a matter of personal choice. Actually, the Shvetambara tradition recognises two types of monks—the *jinakalpin* and the *sthavirakalpin* and considers both practices as equally valid paths to salvation.

Both traditions agree that after his renunciation, Mahavira wandered from place to place for twelve years performing the most severe austerities with unswerving determination. He practised self-mortification which involved abstinence from food as well as water for several days together. The Jain laity emulated his example and, even today, many Jains undertake such fasts as an expression of spiritual activity.

Often during his meditations, Mahavira was attacked by uncomprehending villagers who "struck him with fists, sticks and lances" or "cut his flesh or tore his hair" but he endured it all. In fact, the Digambaras believe that throughout this period Mahavira observed a vow of silence.

Omniscience:

Upon reaching the omniscient state, the sage Mahavira became a Tirthankara. This state is so rare and exalted that Jains regard Tirthankaras as superhuman beings.

After attaining omniscience, Mahavira sat in the lotus position and maintained a trance while Shakra and the gods miraculously created an assembly hall where all could come and hear him preach. The audience consisted of gods, demigods, human beings and animals. The assembly was called the *samavasarana*. Mahavira sat in the centre and his body, which had become free of all impurities, shone like crystal. A special feature of the *samavasarana* was that the spectators could see the Tirthankara *en face* from all four sides.

The Tirthankara is distinguished from an ordinary *kevalin* by the eight miraculous phenomena that accompany him all the time everywhere. These include: (1) a throne upon which he is seated (2) a three-tiered parasol above him (3) a resplendent halo behind him (4) an *ashoka* tree near him (5) sixty-four attendants waving *chauris* standing around him (6) celestial music (7) the beating of kettle-drums and (8) cascades of flowers from the heavens. These eight attributes remain with the Tirthankara until such time as he attains *moksha*.

While these beliefs are common to all the Jains, the Digambara sect asserts that every Tirthankara, after obtaining omniscience, becomes totally free from biological processes and functions such as hunger, thirst, sleep, perspiration and age. The Shvetambaras disagree with the Digambaras and contend that even in the omniscient state, the exalted one is required to obey bodily laws, eat ordinary food and engage in physical activities.

The sermons of the Tirthankara, according to the Digambara tradition, take the form of *divyadhvani* which is a monotone—the sound of om—and this is only understood by the *ganadharas*. After grasping the import and meaning of the Tirthankara's teachings, the *ganadharas* translate it into *sutra* form. The Shvetambaras do not agree with this belief. They declare that the Jina speaks in a language which is universally understood by animals and people from all regions. In this context the role of the *ganadharas* would not be that of translators but of compilers of the Jina's teachings.

Again, the Shvetambaras differ from the Digambaras as regards the content of a Tirthankara's teachings. The Digambaras believe that all Tirthankaras propound an identical doctrine, and that following the teachings of a particular Jina has no special significance; nothing new is taught. This view appears rather extreme to the Shvetambaras who are willing to admit that slight variations can exist between the teachings of the various Jinas. This issue comes to the fore when comparing the teachings of Parshva and Mahavira. The tradition of *Chaturyama Dharma* that Parshva preached enjoined the four vows—*ahimsa*, *satya*, *asteya*, *aparigraha*. To these, Mahavira added a fifth vow—that of celibacy. This meant a slight elaboration of what Parshva had taught, since celibacy was generally accepted as part of the fourth vow of *aparigraha*. But, the granting of independent status to a particular aspect, which until then was understood only by implication, does reflect a difference in emphasis between the two traditions. Also, with regard to the practice of nudity, the Shvetambaras profess that Mahavira's acceptance of nudity was a departure from the tradition of his predecessor Parshva. However, these discrepancies do not affect the Shvetambara sect as it believes

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that the teachings of each Tirthankara need not be absolutely identical in every detail. In fact, the discrepancies support and validate their stand. This issue, however, remains an unresolved point of contention between the two sects.

Liberation:

Mahavira attained *moksha* at the age of seventy-two in 527 B.C. and became a *siddha*. This event took place at Papa or Pava (modern Pavapuri) near Patna. The Jains celebrate this event as the Dipavali Festival commemorating and emulating the celebration by local kings on the day Mahavira attained *nirvana*. The *Kalpa-Sutra* states that, on the moonless night when the venerable ascetic Mahavira died, the eighteen chieftains of the Mallaka and Lichchhavi clans—the confederate princely chiefs of Kashi and Koshala—instituted an illumination exclaiming that: the lamp of inner light is extinguished; let us now burn lamps of ordinary clay.

Sectarian Differences

Although several schisms took place in the Jain community, the major and most lasting of them has been the one that split it into the Digambara and the Shvetambara traditions. The fundamental divergences between them lie in three areas. The first of these concerns the role of women in Jain ideology. The Digambara sect claims that the female body lacks the adamantine quality that is a prerequisite for the attainment of *moksha*. Therefore a woman must be reborn as a man before this divine state is possible. The Shvetambaras oppose the above view by stating that the body of a woman is in no way inferior to that of a man and both are equally capable of attaining spiritual salvation. They base this belief on the thirteenth Tirthankara, Malli, who, they claim, belonged to the female sex. Both sects believe that vices such as cheating and cunning result in the birth of any *jiva* as a woman.

The second issue involves the role of nudity in religious life. Interestingly, female nudity is considered untenable by both sects and neither allows its nuns to go undressed. For the Shvetambaras, this poses no doctrinal complications because they do not consider attire an impediment to salvation. But according to the Digambaras, the retention or attachment to any possession, even clothing, renders one incapable of attaining *moksha*, since clothing implies that a person is not free from the sense of shame and sexuality. Hence as far as the Digambaras are concerned, women as well as Shvetambara monks attired in white clothing, are automatically disqualified as possible contenders for salvation.

The third major point of conflict concerns the nature of the Jina. The Shvetambaras view the Jina as a being who is capable of communicating at a normal human level and engaging in various human and physical functions. This credence is in complete discord with that of the Digambaras who insist that the omniscient Jina is a superior being who never takes part in worldly activities, nor does he perform any bodily activities. His preachings are in the form of a mystical divine sound that can be compared to thunder which is transmitted in all directions: no words are articulated and yet the message is clear.

The Digambara tradition is abstruse and conservative while the Shvetambara tradition expounds a more pragmatic worldly view. The outward manifestations of the two sects vary and yet basic religious concepts and places of pilgrimage are still shared. Just as certain ideological differences exist among other religious groups—as among the Christians between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants, or between the Muslim Shias and Sunnis, similarly they prevail among the Digambara and the Shvetambara Jains. But the divergences are not of a fundamental nature; essentially the Digambaras and the Shvetambaras are branches of the same tree. The ancient system of Jainism continues to be relevant for the approximately four million believers in India today.

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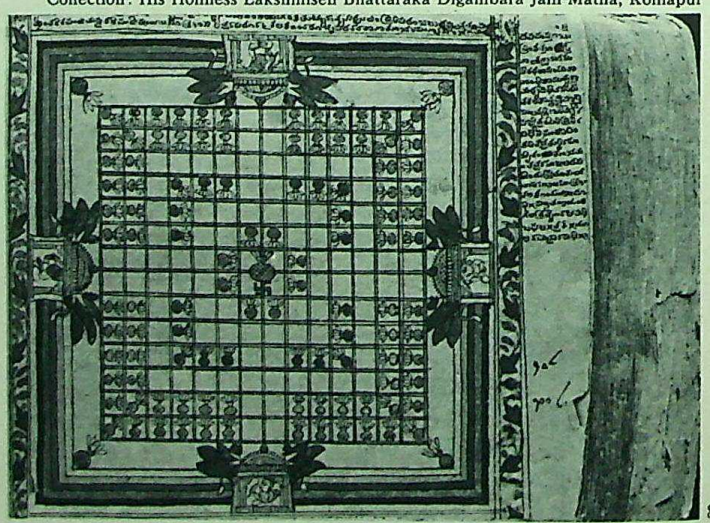

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ILLUSTRATIONS

1 Sacred *mandapa;* paper; *c.* 1900 A.D.; Kolhapur; Rajasthani-Deccani Style
2 *Rhimkar mantra;* paper; *c.* 1750 A.D.; Jaipur School
3 Folio from the Devasano Pado *Kalpa-Sutra* and *Kalakacharya-Katha;* paper; *c.* 1500 A.D.; Western Indian Style (Gujarat and Rajasthan)
4 Cosmological chart (detail); cloth *pata; c.* 17th century; School of Gujarat
5 Tirthankara and eight auspicious symbols; paper; *c.* 1450 A.D.; Western Indian Style (Gujarat and Rajasthan)
6 The *shri-mandapa;* paper; *c.* 1900 A.D.; Kolhapur; Rajasthani-Deccani Style
7 Sacred square diagram; paper; *c.* 1900 A.D.; Kolhapur; Rajasthani-Deccani Style
8 Sacred *kalashas;* paper; *c.* 1900 A.D.; Kolhapur; Rajasthani-Deccani Style

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Manuscript Tradition

For more than three thousand years, the Vedic tradition has been preserved orally. In India it is believed that the *Vedas* first appeared as divine manifestations to the great seers at the time of Creation; since then, according to Indian myth, the collective memory of the sages has served as the exclusive and infallible repository of these revelations.

Even though it is difficult to separate myths and legends from historical facts, linguistic evidence indicates that the Vedic lore must have crystallised sometime between 1500 and 1000 B.C. and since that time holy men have bequeathed these incantations from generation to generation in a continuous and uninterrupted tradition to this day. The oldest parts of this tradition do not represent historical poems or heroic tales, but consist of a collection of hymns, prayers and magico-religious formulae. These were eventually consolidated into four sections: the *Rig-Veda,* the *Sama-Veda,* the *Yajur-Veda* and the *Atharva-Veda.* The contents of the four *Vedas,* couched in *devabhasha* (Sanskrit), were retained and transmitted vocally by priestly families.

Thus for centuries there were no written versions of the Vedic religious and philosophical teachings. This was largely due to the apprehension that transcribing them would detract from their sanctity. The very act of documenting holy beliefs would have been deemed irreverent. Therefore, the only method of conserving them was to memorise them. Towards this end the learned sages devised a complex mnemonic system of instruction: both the preceptor and the disciple exercised great caution to replicate phonetically the exact sounds in the same sequence as in the original revelation. Because they were recited and heard rather than written and read, the *Vedas* were known as *shrutis.*

One of the techniques employed to facilitate memorisation was to repeat, in different combinations, various sounds, syllables and words. Tedious though the practice of constant reiteration may seem, it served to engrave the tradition in the memory of the listeners through its musical construction; the chanting was no more tiring "than the repetitions of motifs in the musical compositions of Bach or Wagner." As rhetoric, the incantations proved extremely effective.

There is some evidence that the grammarians of ancient India were acquainted with some form of alphabetical structure and that they had precisely analysed and defined the syntax of the Sanskrit language by the

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fifth century B.C. Yet there appears to be no trace of any early script that can be specifically identified with Sanskrit.

Education in the voluminous Vedic texts continued to be propagated orally and, in many instances, the father probably performed the function of teacher. There is very little information available on the system of imparting knowledge and learning in ancient India. But verses from a Rig-Vedic hymn provide a fanciful insight into educational methods of schools of the period by striking a comparison between a teacher leading a chorus of pupils and the croaking of frogs at the beginning of the monsoon:

"Hibernating throughout the year
like Brahmans observing a vow,
Animated by the divine Parjanya
the frogs are now croaking loudly.
When heavenly showers fall on them,
lying in a pond like shrivelled skins,
Like the lowing of cows for their calves,
sound the voices of frogs in unison.
When showers fall on longing creatures
and slake their thirst at the start of the rainy season,
With rapture in the voice, like the son his father,
they greet each other without cessation.
One repeats the word of another,
like students echoing the voice of the teacher;
Together they form a chorus,
When at rain fall they loudly croak."

The Spoken Word

Although the Indian Oral Tradition began, in a formal sense, with the Vedic lore it was not restricted to it. Almost a millenium later, in the sixth century B.C., the scope of the oral tradition expanded to include the theological doctrines and the canonical literature of the two heterodox religious systems—Jainism and Buddhism. Nor was the tradition thematically confined to religion: within its large framework it encompassed expressions of a literary nature such as narrative prose, romantic poetry and drama. It also covered treatises on grammar, mathematics, astrology, medicine and the arts. Incredible as it may seem, these ancient compilations reveal—from their metre and rhythmic structure—that their authors had designed them precisely for the purpose of recitation and chanting. In fact the oral system was very basic to the Indian way of thinking and living. It extended across centuries and to different parts of the country and the contributions of priests, philosophers, as well as of poets, lent it an intricate and varied character.

It is not certain whether writing was known and practised in India when the *Vedas* were compiled and consolidated. Although the people of the Indus Valley Civilisation had developed a pictographic script more than 3000 years ago, the knowledge of this alphabet appears to have vanished with that civilisation. Even when writing was re-introduced into India by traders from Mesopotamia in the eighth century B.C., it was regarded merely as a practical tool for maintaining accounts and keeping inventories. There was no effort on the part of the people of those times to develop this medium for recording and transcribing the vast poetic and religious heritage. For the Indians the spoken word was undoubtedly superior to the written word and remnants of this attitude are apparent even today.

The Written Word

The supremacy of the Oral Tradition continued until about the fourth century B.C. References to writing begin to appear in the early layers of the Pali Buddhist canon of *c.* fifth century B.C. These allusions comprise descriptions of materials employed for writing such as leaves, wood and metal sheets. Sections of the Buddhist canon also mention writing as a distinguished aspect of learning and contain suggestions that Buddhist nuns should occupy themselves with this activity. Yet, nowhere is there any intimation that sacred literature should be copied or read. The oral system had conditioned astonishing retentive abilities in the minds of the people and because of their capacity to memorise volumes of literature, they experienced no need to revolutionise prevalent practices and customs.

However, in the centuries immediately preceding the Christian Era, both the desire and the need to relegate holy teachings to writing began to manifest itself. This transformation emerged from the ambiguity which began to arise from conflicting interpretations of religious doctrines. Unlike the orthodox Vedic religious group, the Jains and the Buddhists had not inherited a monolithic tradition of divine origin or of unquestioned antiquity. It therefore became a matter of substantial import for them to recall and establish, as authentically as possible, the original teachings of their mortal preceptors. And this they could best achieve by recording their canonical works in writing. Since an inscribed version of their religious beliefs was of no interest to the adherents of the Vedic faith, the written tradition appears to have derived its initial thrust from the two heterodox groups—the Jains and the Buddhists.

The Jains experienced the dangers inherent in the system of oral transmission during the famine that struck Magadha in the fourth century B.C. At that time a large body of monks migrated to the south. Of the monks who remained in Magadha, many died of starvation and those who survived suffered serious memory lapses due to malnutrition. Consequently, large sections of the Jain canon were lost.

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To prevent further fragmentation, the Jains convened a Council of Monks at Pataliputra where the learned assembly compiled the extant sections of their canonical teachings. Disputes concerning the validity of this anthology arose when a number of the monks who had left during the famine returned to Magadha. They found it to be full of inaccuracies and aberrations and therefore rejected it. This and other points of contention regarding the monks' code of conduct led to a split in the community. The dissenters claimed to be closer to the teachings of Mahavira in their convictions, as well as in their religious practices. Declaring themselves to be the Mula Sangha, "the original group," they broke away to form the Digambara sect.

In the centuries that followed, the breach became permanent and complete, with each sect having its own set of canonical teachings. The Digambara sect adopted as its canon the works of Monk Dharasena and Monk Gunabhadra which were compiled around the first century B.C. from the disintegrated mass of Jain religious pedagogy. Meanwhile, the Shvetambara sect renewed its efforts at consolidating its teachings through collective resolutions as at Pataliputra. The Shvetambaras summoned a Council of Monks at Mathura in the fourth century A.D. and thereafter convened two more, in quick succession, at Vallabhi in Saurashtra. The second conclave held at Vallabhi, around the beginning of the sixth century A.D., proved to be the most constructive. There, under the guidance of Monk Devardhigani, the participants agreed unanimously to commission redactions of the sacred texts. The transcription of the texts, in a methodical manner—as opposed to earlier sporadic efforts—must also have commenced at this time.

The Jain tradition mentions repeated attempts, individual as well as collective, towards preserving the canonical and exegetical teachings. Yet curiously, the Jains do not possess any written text that can be dated between the fourth century B.C., when the council at Pataliputra was convened, and the sixth century A.D., when the second council at Vallabhi was held. Actually, few extant Jain manuscripts belong to a date earlier than the tenth century A.D. This is all the more surprising since references to written material occur in Jain religious texts composed around the sixth century A.D. What could be the reason for this hiatus between the decision to commit the sacred texts to writing and their actual appearance in manuscript form?

Evidently, the Jains were not in a position to implement their resolves as enthusiastically as they made them. Also, perhaps their efforts were hampered by the inaccessibility of the materials required for writing a connected text. Therefore, only a few texts must have been transcribed and these apparently did not survive the inhospitable climatic conditions. Again, there is the possibility that manuscripts were destroyed during the Islamic invasions that swept the country during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Although all these rationalisations have been put forward, they are not truly convincing. For, none of them adequately accounts for the extreme paucity of transcribed manuscripts before the tenth century A.D. and their gradual appearance thereafter.

A more plausible explanation for this phenomenon is two-fold: firstly, there appears to have been no organised and sustained effort at transcribing and documenting Jain teachings; and secondly, the facilities for the safe-keeping of these manuscripts were lacking. The concept of temple-libraries as repositories of written texts had yet to germinate and take shape. In the absence of such an institution, the efforts made towards the commissioning, collecting and storing of manuscripts proved ineffective. It was only after the eighth century that this activity received the necessary impetus. This occurred when the *bhattarakas*—the religious and temporal heads of the community—made a conscious effort in that direction. The institution of the *shastra-bhandaras*, its origin and growth are closely inter-linked with the developments within the tradition of Jain monarchism.

Temple Repositories

The historical development of the Jain religious order shows that in the first few centuries after the death of Mahavira, the monks led an itinerant life preaching and propagating the faith. Thereafter—from the second century A.D. to the eighth century A.D.—Jainism received substantial patronage from kings, queens and ministers of state. Generous endowments enabled the community to build grand temples and monastic establishments. Quite frequently, land grants accompanied these donations and gradually, the Jain clergy found itself burdened with the management of properties and religious establishments. The complicated and complex nature of the task required that it be entrusted to a senior member of the order and the person appointed to this position came to be known as the *bhattaraka*. This office appears to have been created *c.* the eighth century A.D., judging from the genealogical charts of the *bhattaraka* tradition.

The *bhattarakas* were—and still are in some places—the administrative heads of Jain religious establishments. As the custodians of temples they were in charge of the maintenance of the buildings, the images enshrined within them and all the paraphernalia connected with temple rituals. And, it was their involvement in the organisational aspects of temple management which set the *bhattarakas*, who were also ordained men, apart from other ascetics of the Jain faith.

Many of these organisational heads were erudite and dedicated men. By virtue of their position they were in close and constant contact with the lay votaries of the order. They

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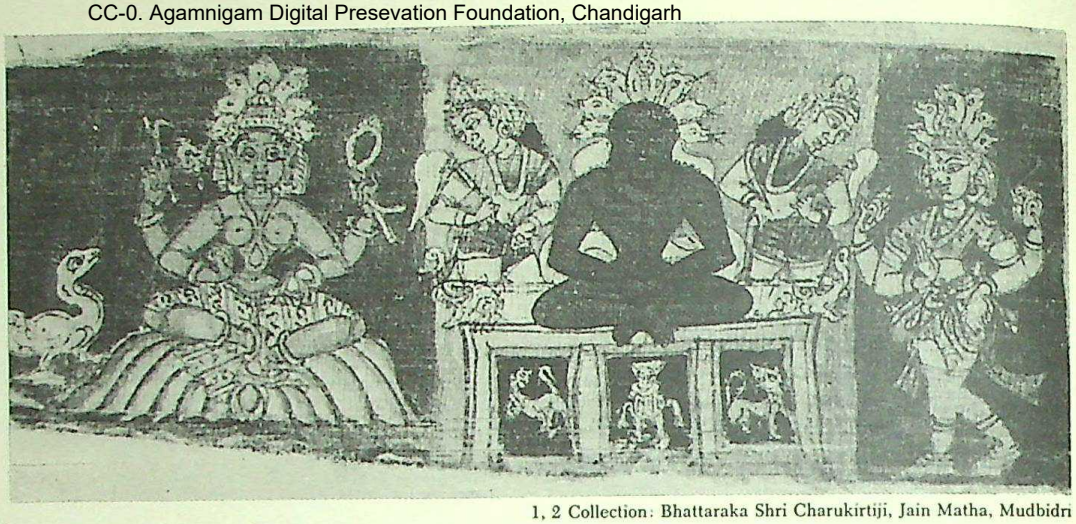

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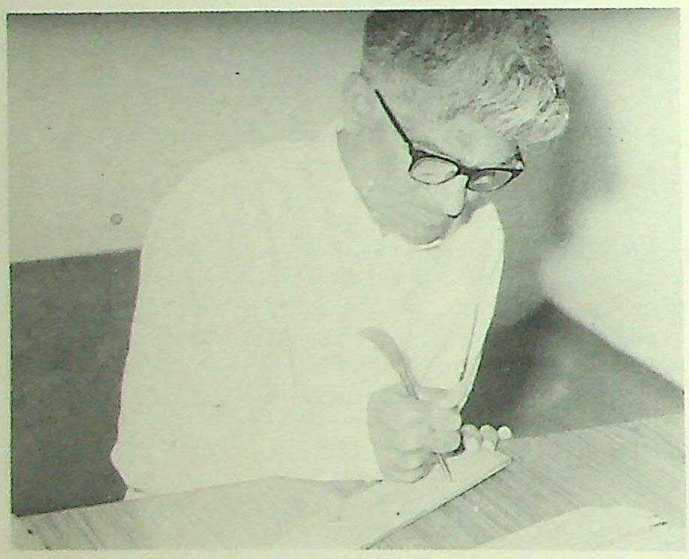
1, 2 Collection: Bhattaraka Shri Charukirtiji, Jain Matha, Mudbidri



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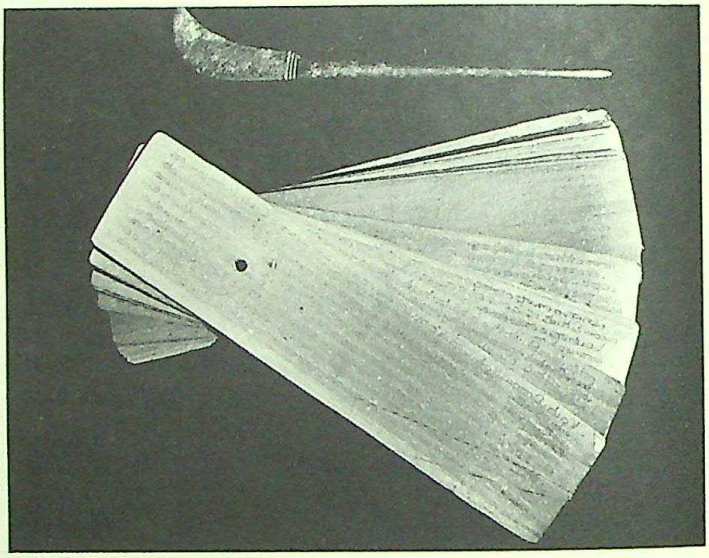

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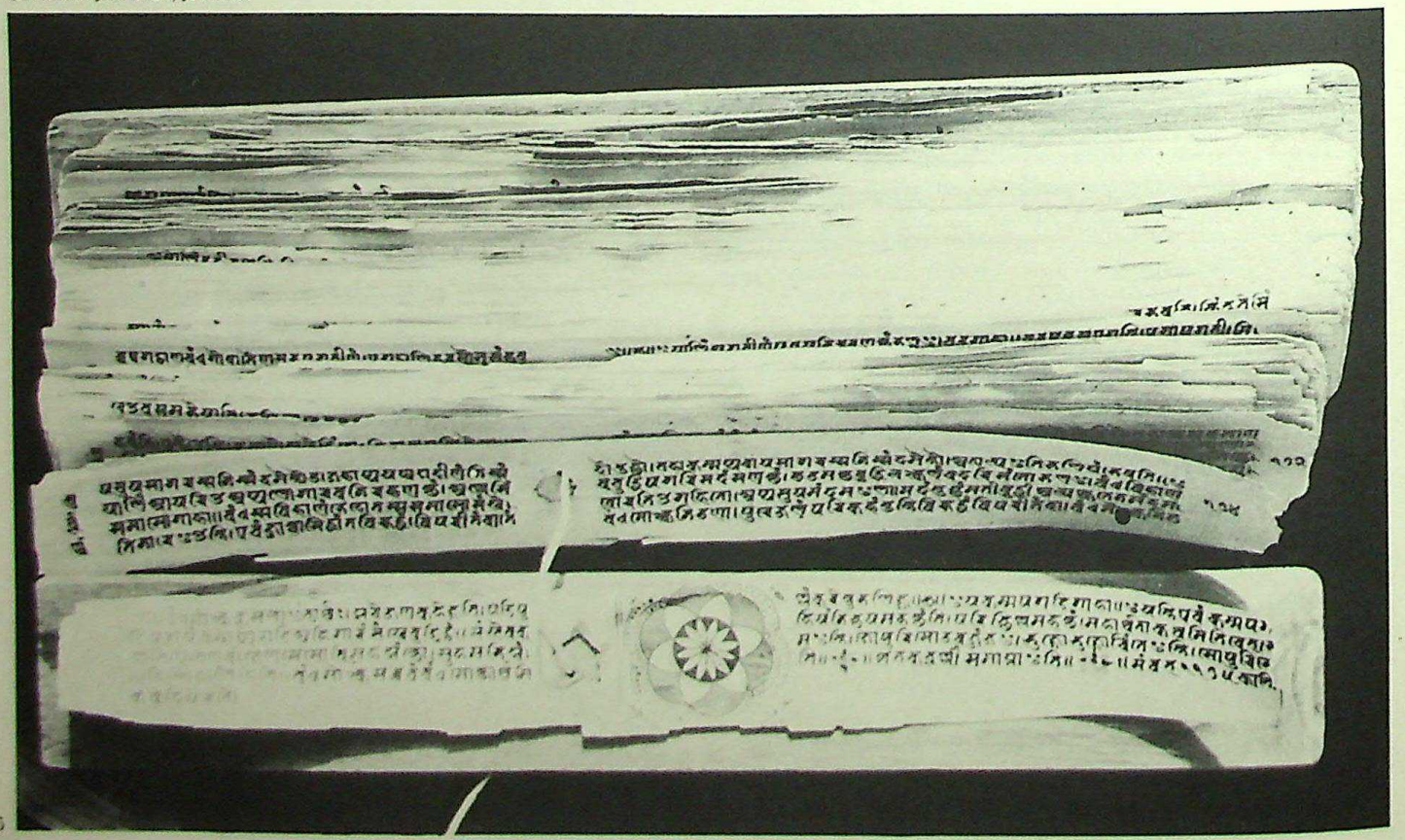

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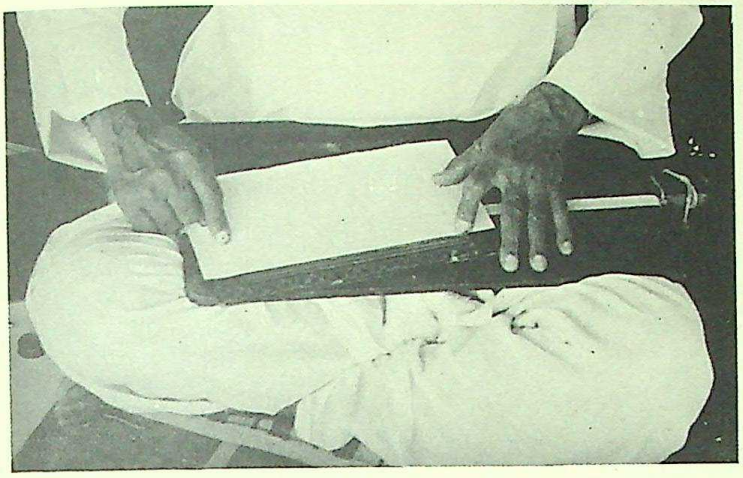

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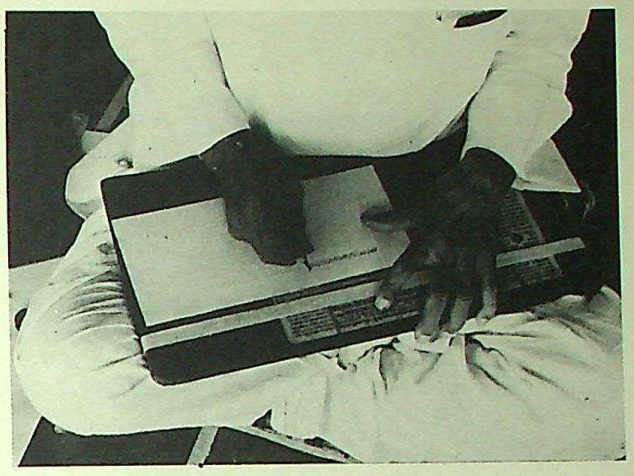

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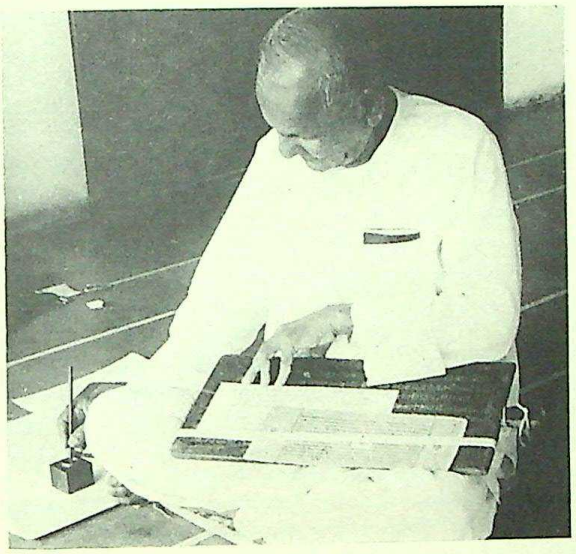

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used this effectively to channelise the piety of their followers into beneficial activities. They encouraged the laity to enrich the temples with donations of icons for worship and manuscripts for spiritual enlightenment. They extolled the *shastra-dan* as an act of religious merit with verses such as "the one who writes or makes others write, the one who hears or makes others hear, the one who gives or makes others give is noble and a sharer of *punya*." Soon the pious act of commissioning manuscripts of religious texts became frequent among the Jains. The usual custom was to proffer the sacred texts to religious personages or gift them to temple libraries. Sometimes a devotee would order numerous copies of a particular text for purposes of dissemination to various centres. Very occasionally, a manuscript would be embellished with paintings. Interestingly, none of these texts were ever commissioned for the personal pleasure of the lay votary; they were regarded as sacred objects and their rightful place was in the temple or, more specifically, in the *shastra-bhandara* attached to the temple.

The manuscripts gifted to monks were either retained by them for their personal use or placed in the *shastra-bhandaras.* The latter was the more preferred practice, as the monks avoided carrying these precious objects with them for fear of losing or damaging them during their perigrinations. In the *shastra-bhandaras* the manuscripts remained in safe custody and, moreover, were within easy reach whenever required.

Over the centuries generations of *bhattarakas* and monks systematically and assiduously built up the *shastra-bhandaras.* Their primary concern was to collect works connected with their faith. It was, fortunately, not a limiting one. The contents of the *shastra-bhandaras* included texts on a variety of other subjects such as grammar, mathematics, astrology and rhetoric as well. With a collector's zeal, the *bhattarakas* acquired copies of texts that were not available in their *bhandaras;* they either urged their followers to commission the texts or else they obtained them from other *shastra-bhandaras.* This obsessive reverence for knowledge made them store, in their collection, manuscripts and books irrespective of their subject, religious affiliation or state of preservation. Tattered and fragmentary manuscripts, as well as works belonging to other religions, found a place in Jain repositories. If, for some reason, any collection was not properly cared for, the custodians of *shastra-bhandaras* would happily incorporate it into their own. And yet, despite the care and attention the Jains lavished upon their manuscripts and books, only a fraction of them have survived the ravages of time.

Nevertheless, those which have been preserved reflect the various phases of the tradition.

The Digambara and Shvetambara Traditions

The tradition of temple-libraries was common to both the sects of the Jains. The contents of these *shastra-bhandaras* reveal a manuscript tradition which contains numerous illustrated documents, including palm-leaf and paper manuscripts and cloth *patas.* These exhibit a fairly continuous and widespread tradition. More importantly, they indicate that the documents commissioned by the two sects differ in three aspects. The first of these is the quantity of documents commissioned by each sect. It is apparent from the profuse number of manuscripts present in the Shvetambara *bhandaras* that, between the two sects, the Shvetambaras were more inclined towards commissioning such documents than the Digambaras. Against hundreds of such items produced by the Shvetambara Jains, the Digambara output of less than a hundred appears meagre.

The documents of the two sects differ in thematic content as well as in style. The divergence in the choice of subject matter arises from the fact that, after the initial split, each sect developed an independent literary identity. The dissimilarities in pictorial content, however, do not stem from sectarian differences. They seem instead to derive from the morphological processes that attend a style during the successive stages of its growth, its extentions into other areas and its fragmentation into local idioms. In the sphere of Jain painting, elements such as hieratic considerations and the role of patronage were also significant factors in the moulding of style.

Over the centuries each sect has established centres throughout India. Both illustrated manuscript traditions serve to supplement and complement one another. And together they have contributed valuable evidence towards determining the historical unfolding of Jain painting in particular, as well as towards the history of Indian Miniature Painting in general.

ILLUSTRATIONS

1, 2 Palm-leaf folios: Scroll design; Tirthankara Parshva and attendant divinities; *Shatakhandagam;* palm-leaf; A.D. dated 1112-1120; Karnataka; Western Indian Style

3 Scribe writing on palm-leaf with an iron stylus-tool

4 Palm-leaf manuscript and iron stylus-tool for scrapping the leaf, inscribing the text and making stringholes in the folios.

One of the methods of preparing palm-leaf folios was to first obtain fresh young leaves and bury them in the sand for three months to cure them. After that, the leaves were trimmed and used as carriers of sacred texts.

The text was incised with a sharp stylus-tool on the folios and then the leaves were rubbed with powdered carbon ink. The powder would become embedded in the incised letters. Alternatively, the scribe used liquid ink. In Karnataka, the ink was manufactured from the oil extracted from two types of fruit. The oil was heated and combined with various powdered substances, including roasted tumeric and *harde.* The mixture was later heated again and used as ink.

5 Palm-leaf manuscript; dated A.D. 1118; Gujarat and Rajasthan; Western Indian Style

6 The scribe first trims the paper folio to the required size. He then presses it on a board which has strings tied in parallel horizontal lines. The imprint left by the strings on the paper acts as a guide for writing the text.

7, 8, 9 Scribe copying text from an older manuscript

10 Paper Manuscript folios; c. A.D. 1375-1400; Gujarat and Rajasthan; Western Indian Style

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Miniature Painting

Although miniature painting appears to have been practised among the Jains before the tenth century, no traces of it have been preserved for posterity. Its existence in the eighth and the ninth centuries can be inferred from descriptive passages in contemporary literature which furnish valuable insights into the style of painting as well as the themes portrayed during that period.

Of the several references to miniature painting in Jain texts, perhaps the most interesting is the one found in the Digambara Jain narrative of the *Adi-Purana.* It occurs in the section that recounts the former existences of Tirthankara Rishabha. Poet Jinasena's version, composed sometime in the ninth century, describes how the beautiful Princess Shrimati remembers her previous existences when she observes some celestial beings in the sky. She recalls the blissful days when she was Svayamprabha, the beloved wife of Lalitanga—destined to become the Tirthankara Rishabha in his last birth. Shrimati longs to be with her previous husband again. Not knowing the current identity of Lalitanga, nor where to locate him, Shrimati designs a large *chitra-pata* (a painted scroll or board) and illustrates it with some of the events she recalls from her life with Lalitanga. She entrusts the completed version of the painting to her companion and requests her to carry it to the temple with the hope that Lalitanga may see it and recognise the scenes in it. Shrimati's friend travels with the *chitra-pata* from one town to another. Finally, one day, among those who stop at the temple to admire the painting is Prince Vajrajangha, who was Lalitanga in a previous existence. He comments appreciatively on the excellent proportions and execution of the various motifs. Exclaiming that the illustrations are more eloquent than words, he notes the skillful handling of colours in one panel, their brightness in another and the emotional nuances of yet another. Certain panels contained decorative motifs such as rows of *kalpavrikshas,* pools of blossoming lotuses, and the majestic Mount Meru. Interspersed within these were panels depicting Lalitanga and Svayamprabha in amorous dalliance, of him in mock anger, of her trying to mollify him, of her seated with averted face, refusing to yield to his coaxing. Through the agency of these illustrations, the Prince recollects his former identity, goes in search of his beloved and the two are reunited in matrimony.

While this information pertains to secular painting, a passage in the *Kuvalayamala-kaha,* a Prakrit Shvetambara Jain text of the eighth century, describes a cloth painting with a religious theme. The subject is the *samsara-chakra,*

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featuring a wide variety of scenes which depict the futility of human existence, the miserable condition of other forms of life, the torments of hell, as well as the delights of heaven. This cloth *pata,* according to the text, is painted by Bhanu and it displays extraordinary workmanship. Here again, the emphasis is on the proper mixing of colours, the careful differentiation between tonal values and the use of a fine but distinct line.

Although most Jain authors tend to exaggerate and resort to the use of clichés in their descriptions, the assessment in these passages appears to portray, fairly accurately, the prevailing norms in painting. The type of pictorial expression mentioned has many parallels with contemporary wall paintings of the period. There is obviously a great deal of similarity between the miniature and mural traditions in such aspects as the division of picture-space into panels, the choice of decorative motifs such as the lotus pool as well as in the aesthetic considerations regarding line, colour and tonal gradations. It would appear that the difference between the miniature and the mural traditions was primarily one of scale rather than of content or style. Nevertheless, this does not deny that the limited size of the cloth or the wooden *pata,* did play a part in simplifying the mural tradition.

In the tenth century, the tradition of miniature painting—probably derived from *pata* painting and not too different from it—makes its appearance in manuscript illustration. This art-form manifests itself in the wooden book-covers and the palm-leaf manuscripts of the Jains and the Buddhists. The Buddhist tradition, prevalent in eastern India, chiefly in the provinces of Bengal and Bihar, flourished in the large monastic complexes such as those in Nalanda and Vikramshila. These religious institutions functioned as universities and theological colleges as well as studios equipped with scriptoria for copying and illustrating manuscripts and workshops for casting metal icons. They served as important centres for disseminating Buddhist art and thought. The Jain tradition, widely spread in western India, had numerous religious establishments in Gujarat and Rajasthan where manuscripts could be copied and illustrated.

Although not as prolific in their output as the Buddhists, the Jains produced some remarkable documents in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. These illustrated works reveal, in their concept and approach, many correspondences to contemporary Buddhist documents. These similarities, combined with the fact that the first extant example of the Jains appears to be several decades later than that of the Buddhists, has led some scholars to postulate that the Jains learnt the art of manuscript illustration from the Buddhists. The argument, however, is not convincing, based as it is on what has or has not survived the ravages of time. In fact it is highly unlikely that adherents of either faith borrowed the art of manuscript illustration from the other. In both groups, the same social and cultural forces gave rise to the tradition and guided its development. The situation must be viewed in a wider perspective.

With the destruction of religious and monastic establishments in Bihar and Bengal by Muslim invaders during the twelfth century, the art of Buddhist manuscript illustration came to an abrupt end in eastern India. The Jain tradition in western India, however, escaped such misfortune and continued to develop in the ensuing centuries without any significant interruption. It is, therefore, the only religious group that can claim an unbroken tradition of painting from A.D. 1050 to A.D. 1750. It continues thereafter but its expression, emptied of content, lacks vivacity.

Lady with a painted *pata*; *Maha-Purana*; dated 1540 at Palam
Collection, Shri Digambara Jain Atishaya Kshetra (Shri Mahavirji), Jaipur

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Early Articulations: 1050-1350 A.D.

The beginnings of Jain Miniature Painting survive in the form of illustrated palm-leaf manuscripts and wooden book-covers belonging to the eleventh and twelfth centuries. These early documents represent a widespread tradition of Jain Painting—of coherent and cogent expression—and register various phases of its development.

The Jains must have initiated the tradition of transcribing manuscripts before the Christian Era, but it was only after the eighth century that the activity gathered momentum. None of the extant manuscripts executed prior to the tenth century carry illustrations and there is no convincing explanation as to precisely when and how the concept of illustrated manuscripts emerged.

The holy Jain texts of this period were written on palm-leaf even though paper was not unknown at the time. The palm-leaf manuscripts were devised either from the long leaves of the talipot palm or from the shorter leaves of the palmyra palm. These leaves were first cut, then processed and burnished. Thereafter, they were trimmed into folios of equal size. The task of copying commenced with the scribe dividing the folio into two or three columns separated by narrow vertical margins; the number of columns depended upon the length of the folio. The external sides of the first and the last folios were left blank. The text invariably began on the reverse side of the first folio and was transcribed in lines from left to right across its full length, barring the margins. On the reverse side, in the margins, the places for pagination numbers as well as the stringholes were spotted in cinnabar. On the obverse side, only the stringholes were marked; pagination numbers were not indicated. The pagination signs on the folios were shown by letters on the left side and by numerals on the right side (Fig. 19). After completion, the folios of the manuscript were arranged in a pile, strung securely together by means of a cord and enclosed in wooden covers for protection. The whole manuscript was then bound in cloth: the more precious the manuscript, the more costly its textile wrapping.

The palm-leaf manuscripts were written either in ink with a reed pen, or incised with a stylus and smeared with powdered ink. In the manuscripts of this phase, the first of the two techniques was employed. The texts were written in a variant of the *nagari* script, termed as Jain *nagari*. This writing diverges from the regular script in its appearance as well as in the special forms employed for certain letters. The effect is of neatly spaced lines, transcribed in an even rhythmic hand. The script has a studied elegance which makes it aesthetically appealing (Figs 4, 12).

Of the manuscripts executed during this phase, just a handful are illustrated. They are copies of canonical texts and contain only a few miniatures. The illustrations, as a rule, occur in the introductory or the concluding folios of the manuscript. They are in the shape of squarish panels that occupy the full height of the folio (Figs 4, 12, 19). The miniatures are usually placed in the centre of the main column (Fig. 4) and occasionally, in the case of long folios, appear in the side columns as well (Fig. 19). Sometimes the canto endings are indicated by ornamental motifs (Fig. 3). The margins of the document were also employed, though rarely, to feature worshippers or decorative designs (Fig. 4).

Of the illustrated manuscripts of the period, the earliest is dated A.D. 1060 (Fig. 3). One of its folios contains lively representations of the goddess Shri and the god Kamadeva, executed in taut expressive lines symbolising inner energy. On the side panels of the same folio, and on the colophon page, are depictions of elephants whose rounded bodies suggest weight and volume. In terms of style, the linear grace of Kamadeva contrasts with the

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plastic rendition of the elephants. Both are examples of different idioms, the origins of which, interestingly, lie in the ancient tradition of wall painting. The portrayals of the elephants are reminiscent of the naturalistic expression that characterises the fifth century frescoes at Ajanta while that of Kamadeva is closer to the wiry distortion visible in the rare and fragmentary paintings of the eighth century at Ellora. Throughout this early period, the stylistic expression in manuscript illustration oscillates between the two styles. But, gradually, the linear expression derived from Ellora eclipses the older Ajanta tradition; all traces of modelling disappear and there is an increasing emphasis on abstract form.

The miniatures in the Jain canonical texts are hieratic in character and portray Tirthankaras, iconic representations of divinities from the Jain pantheon, monks and worshippers (Figs 3-10). Sometimes the donors appear in the miniatures of palm-leaf folios (Figs. 4, 12) or wooden book-covers (Figs. 17, 21) but their representations are not portraits in the sense that they do not record the actual appearance of the person. The conventional representations of the donors are indistinguishable from those of other worshippers except for the fact that they usually are depicted in a group—the men and their wives—which occupies an important position in the compositional schema of the folio. The miniatures in the introductory folios serve as invocations and usually feature Tirthankaras, the goddess Sarasvati or another divinity (Figs. 4, 6, 7, 9). Sometimes they portray the religious preceptor, at whose suggestion, perhaps, the manuscript was commissioned (Fig. 5). The miniatures, however, bear no relationship to the text; they neither illustrate it nor elucidate it. Their presence had a purely magical value which served to augment the mystical truths expounded in the text as well as to protect it. These miniatures played an esoteric rather than aesthetic role in the manuscript.

In contrast to these palm-leaf manuscripts are the wooden book-covers of this period called *patlis* (Figs. 1, 2, 13-18, 21). They exhibit a remarkable freedom in their style as well as content. Apparently the factors that governed the rendition of miniatures in manuscript illustration did not apply to the *patlis;* they were not confined to portrayals with an iconic bias. Of the early examples of this group, those that feature the floral creeper are particularly beautiful (Fig. 13). The motif of the sinuous stalk as it meanders around birds, animals and human beings is imaginatively rendered in a variety of ways. One *patli* shows a delightful patterning of lotus-bud stalks; in another, the stem curves around a leopard and in yet another it encircles a giraffe.

Apart from this group of *patlis* is another group that documents events related to the Jain Church which are of historical significance. They include such episodes as the consecration of the temple of Mahavira at Marot in Marwar by the famous Jain Acharya Jinadutta Suri or the disputation between the protagonists of the Shvetambara and Digambara sects. Executed sometime between A.D. 1125 and 1150, the latter is a superb *patli* recording scenes connected with the discussion between the Shvetambara monk, Vadi Deva Suri and the Digambara monk Kumudachandra (Figs. 15, 16). This dialogue on Jain philosophy took place at the court of King Siddharaja Jayasimha of Gujarat in Patan where the Shvetambara savant established his superiority of knowledge. The episode is narrated in the *Prabhandhachintamani,* a literary work which deals with the life of monk Deva Suri, and appears to have been recorded on this *patli* shortly after its occurrence. The *patli* must have been painted at Patan which was a centre of Jain learning.

On one side of the *patli* the two monks are shown with their respective followers in the town of Ashapalli (Fig. 15). The town is indicated by a Jain shrine in the left hand corner and an interesting market scene in the right hand corner of the *patli.* On the other side of the *patli* is the march of the two monks as they leave for Patan (Fig. 16). The Shvetambara monk's procession sees good omens and proceeds joyously while the Digambara monk's followers encounter a cobra and are filled with gloom at this bad omen. On reaching Patan, the Digambara monk wishes to meet the Queen Mother, who is a Digambara Jain princess from south India, but is stopped by the gate-keeper. The actual discussion in court must have been portrayed on the companion *patli,* which, unfortunately, has not survived.

Equally interesting, but in a different context, is a superb *patli* which drew its inspiration from Jain legends (Fig. 14). It has suffered some damage but the portion which depicts the fratricidal battle between the brothers Bharata and Bahubali, sons of the first Tirthankara Rishabha, is well preserved and conveys graphically the grim mood of the moment in the belligerent postures of the brothers and the flying arrows. This *patli,* originally in the Jaisalmer Bhandara, was apparently the only surviving piece of the pair. However, a *patli* (Fig. 1), discovered recently in the Jaisalmer Bhandara appears to be the missing counterpart of the Bharata-Bahubali *patli* (Fig. 14). The style of both *patlis*—in the treatment of the human forms, their faces, figures, and attire as well as the colour scheme—is identical (Figs. 1, 14). Moreover, both exhibit the same verve in their line and execution. Though damaged it is evident that the later discovered *patli* deals with the story of Rishabha who is shown preaching in the centre, and in the adjoining compartment, breaking his fast. The subject is in consonance with that on the Bharata-Bahubali *patli* and leaves no doubt that it is the hitherto missing piece.

The miniatures in these early palm-leaf manuscripts and

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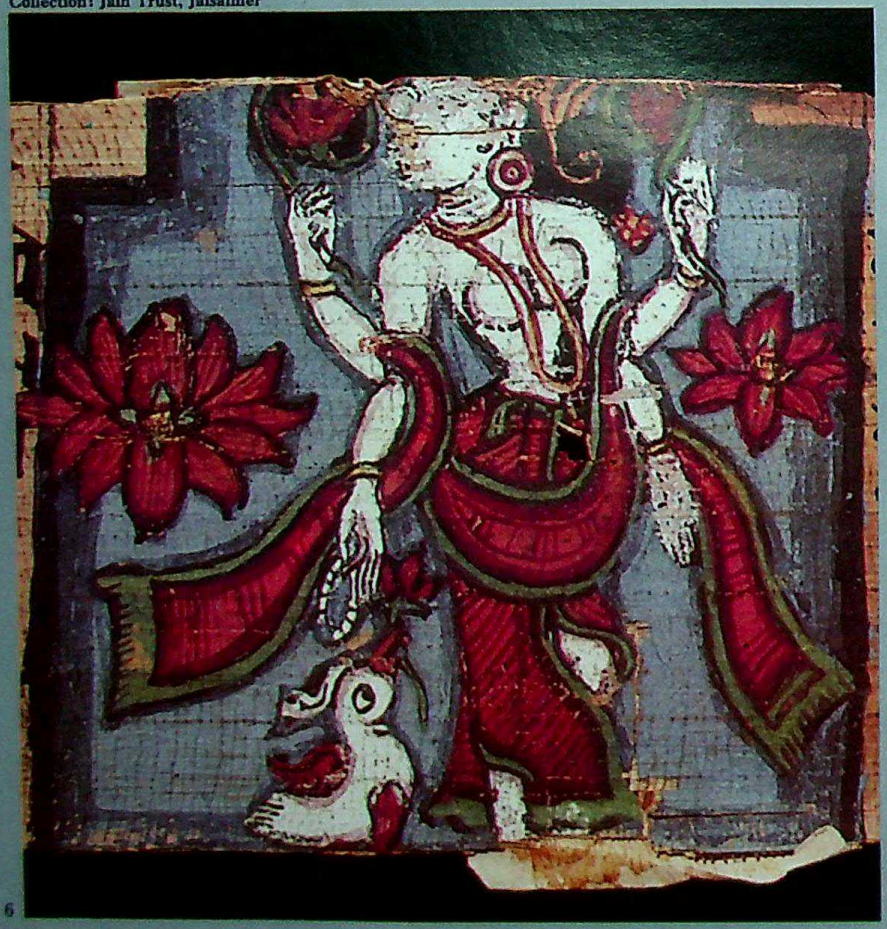

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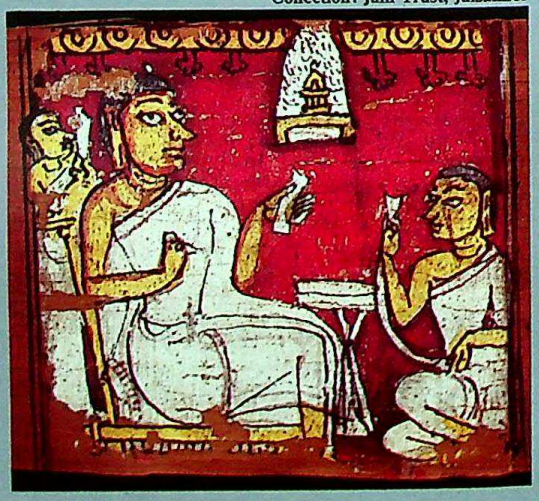

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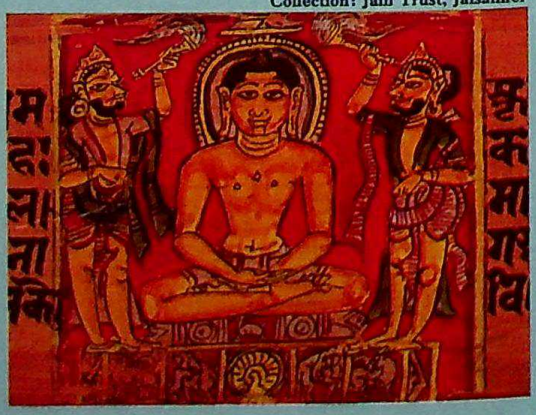

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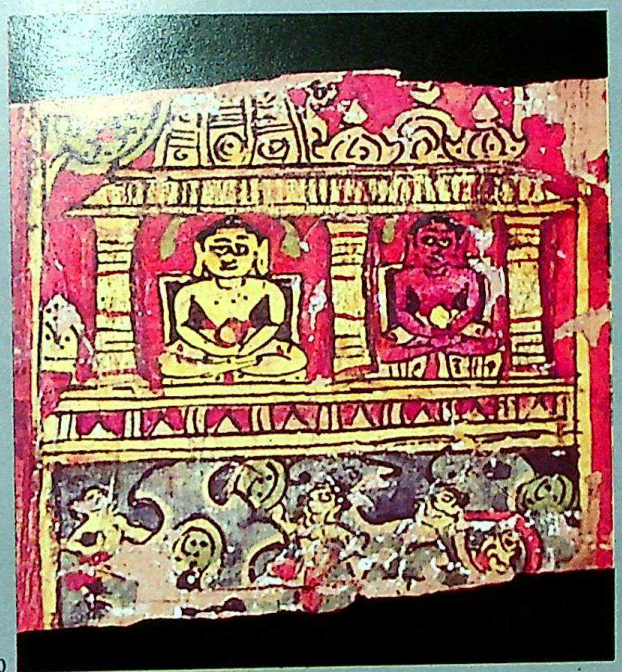

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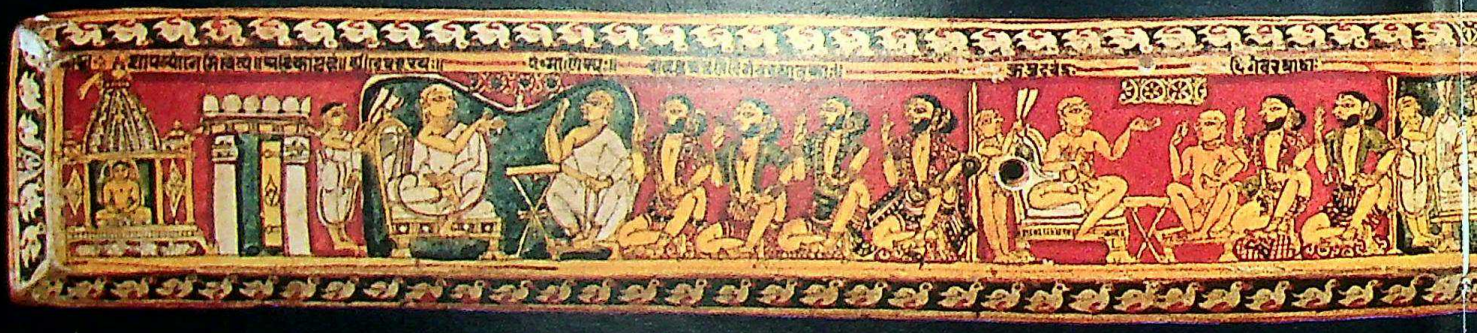

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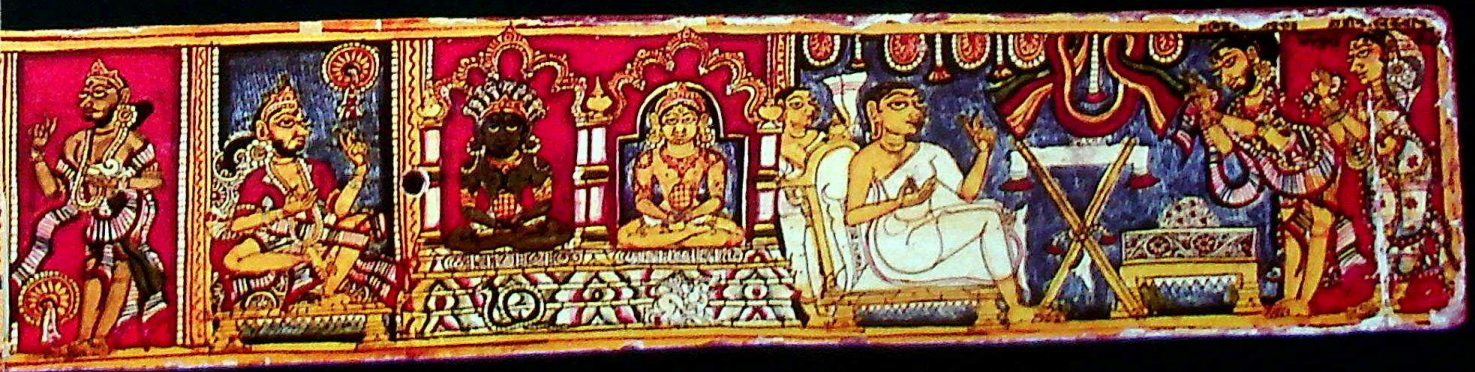

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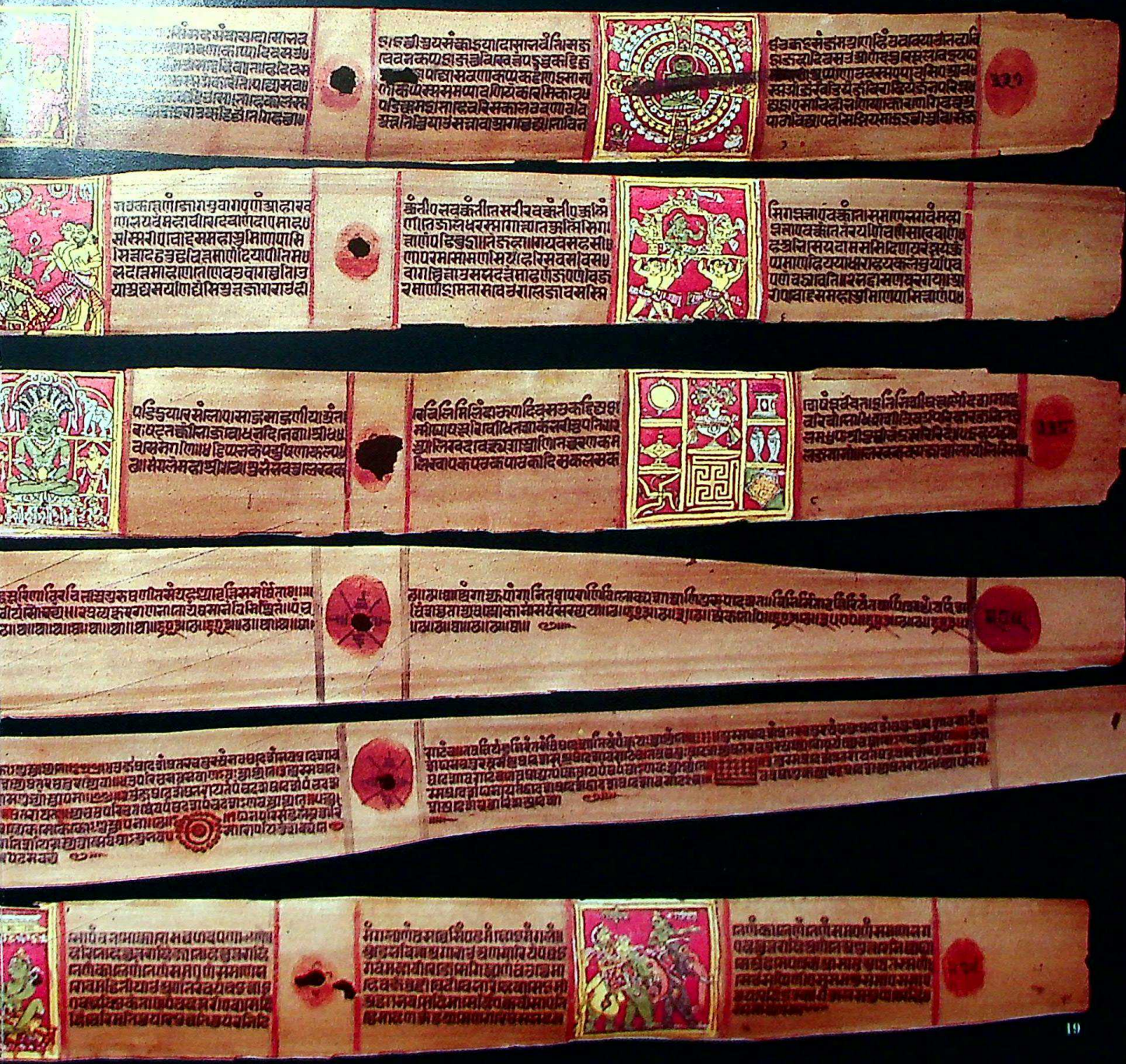

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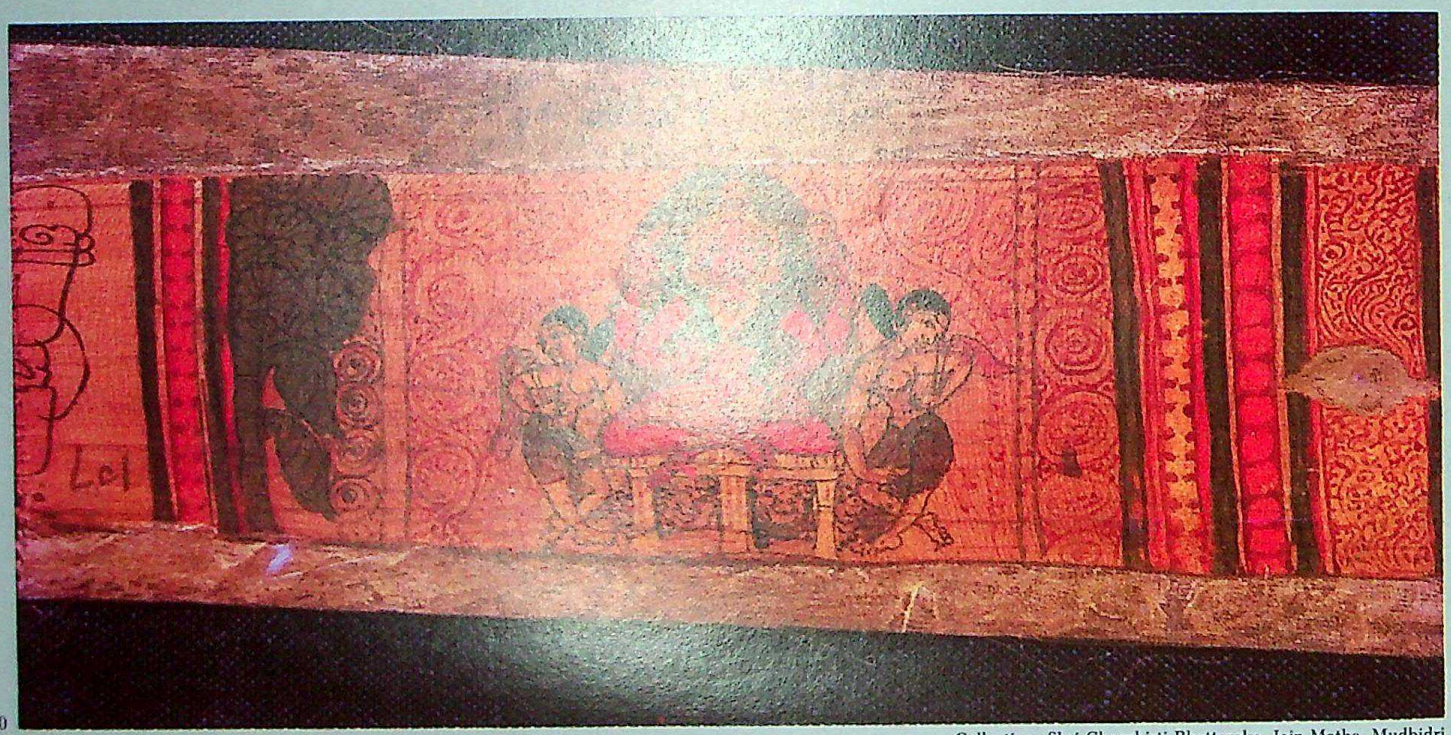

20 Collection: Shri Charukirti Bhattaraka, Jain Matha, Mudbidri

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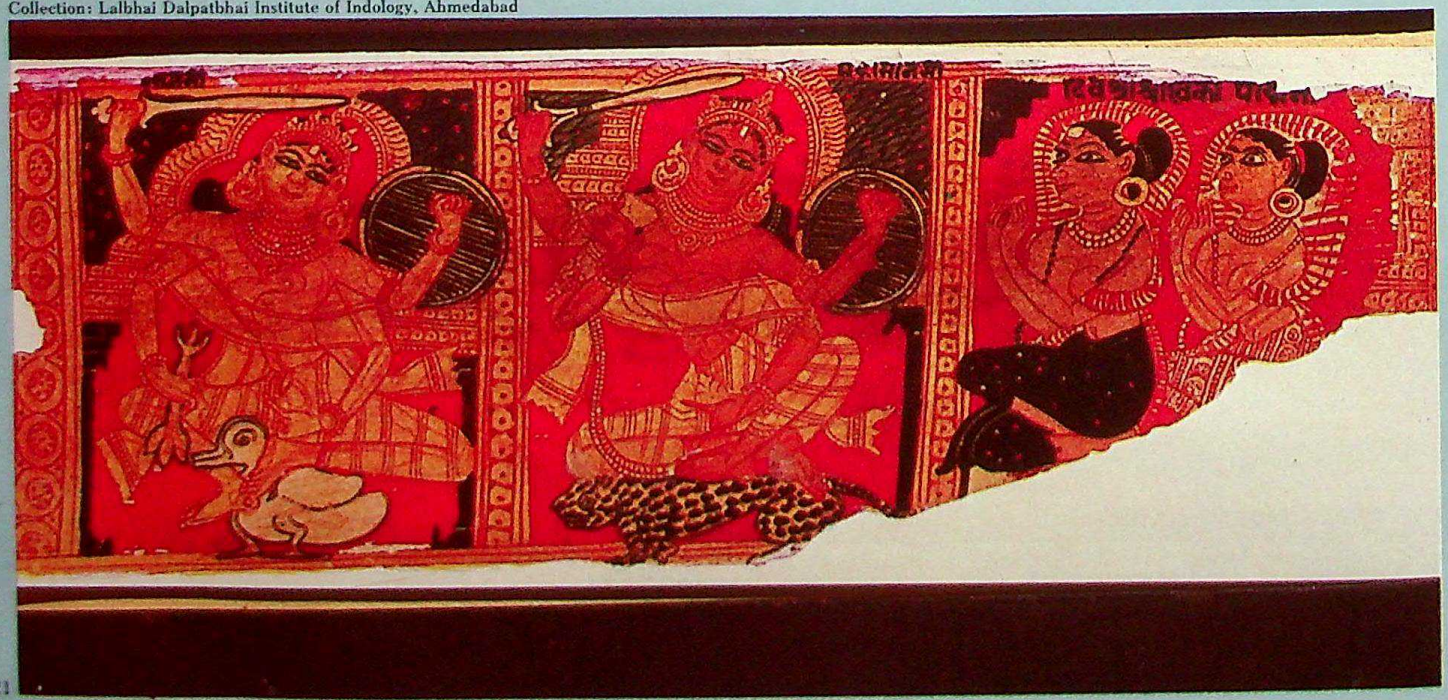

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wooden *patlis* are executed in the Western Indian Style of painting. The distinguishing features of this style are its linear energy, taut angular outlines as well as its exaggerated body proportions and facial features. The most noticeable aspect of the style is the farther eye which protrudes beyond the outline of the face. The glimmerings of this style, in its incipient stage, were evident in the fifth century frescoes at Ajanta. But, as a conscious mode of expression, it asserted itself in the frescoes at Ellora. From there this distinctive style soon spread to other parts of India, and through Buddhist art, to countries outside India.

Even though this style first appeared in wall paintings it finds its fullest expression in miniature paintings in manuscripts of the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries. Executed in almost abstract patterns of shape and colour, these miniatures show a progressive tendency towards figures with no traces of modelling. In the earlier paintings, inflections in line and washes of colour along the outlines suggested plasticity. Gradually, these became mere conventions, used without understanding, and then they disappeared altogether. The quiet insistence on a cursive line and a limited palette of a few basic colours imparts a flat two-dimensional quality to the later paintings.

Most of the early documents belong to the region of Gujarat and Rajasthan. This is established by some of the manuscripts which state, in their colophons, the place of their execution. Some of the *patlis,* such as the one commemorating the consecration of the Mahavira temple in Marwar, indicate that they, too, were painted in this area. These documents set the paradigms of style in their region. Since most of the other documents of this period show remarkable stylistic parallels, they can be attributed to Gujarat and Rajasthan as well.

Although many of the early documents belong to the western region, isolated examples from other regions attest that in the twelfth century, the tradition of Jain Miniature Painting was not confined solely to Gujarat and Rajasthan (Figs. 20, 21). Of these, one is a palm-leaf manuscript from Karnataka (Fig. 20) and the other a painted *patli* from eastern India (Fig. 21). The former, a document belonging to the Digambara Jains, consists of three manuscripts dated A.D. 1113-1120 (Fig. 20). They deal with the Karma doctrine of the Digambara Jains and together they embody this sect's philosophy in its totality. The Prakrit text, alternating with Sanskrit, is written in the Kannada script. This manuscript, like its counterparts in western India, contains iconic portrayals of Jain divinities. There are, besides, some formal and conventional renditions of lotus medallions framed in borders of geometrical scrolls. This set of manuscripts was originally in the Jain Matha at Shravana Belgola and in all likelihood it was both transcribed and painted there. The other example consists of a pair of painted *patlis* featuring Vidyadevis (Fig. 21). In style these wooden book-covers are closely related to the Pala paintings in Buddhist manuscripts from Bihar and Bengal. The points of similarity are evident in the arched niches and in the treatment of the divinites—particularly their faces and postures. Little doubt exists that these *patlis* were executed in eastern India.

Both these examples of Jain Miniature Painting employ a style that is in conformity with the Western Indian Style, and in fact, not too different from the works executed in Gujarat and Rajasthan. The local components are discernible in the architectural setting and other decorative details as well as in the rendering of the human figures and the different ethnic type portrayed. These stylistic variations only serve to show the regional idioms that operated within the established parameters of the Western Indian Style. It is evident from these two examples that the Western Indian Style possessed a stylistic unity that did not permit regional factions to exercise any appreciable influence in altering its integral character. It also is apparent that at the beginning of the twelfth century the stylistic tenets that were to characterise Jain Painting for another four hundred years had already crystallised. Even in the fifteenth century, when the style becomes more complex, the basic principles remained unchanged.

Jain Miniature Painting continues to progress along established lines until the end of the thirteenth century when a new development occurs—the narrative content of the text begins to receive attention. The pictorial narration of legends existed during the period under discussion on book-covers such as the one portraying the battle of Bharata and Bahubali (Fig. 14) or the one depicting the disputation between the two monks (Fig. 15). However, the palm-leaf manuscripts seldom resorted to this mode of illustration. Towards the end of the thirteenth century, in the manuscript of the *Subahu-Katha* and other tales executed in A.D. 1288, a new approach becomes visible (Figs. 22, 23). Another manuscript, probably produced at about the same time, illustrates the story of the Tirthankara Parshva (Fig. 19). Both these manuscripts contain a fair number of illustrations, something that was very rare in the earlier manuscripts. Also, the compositions have become more complex. They are no longer confined to iconic representations of divinities: they include descriptive details of landscape or architecture to indicate the locale of the scene that is being depicted: if the scene is situated outdoors then the landscape is indicated by hills and trees and if situated indoors, then a pavilion is shown and its interior is enlivened by furnishings and objects of everyday use. The illustrations moreover, construct a progressive narrative by compressing

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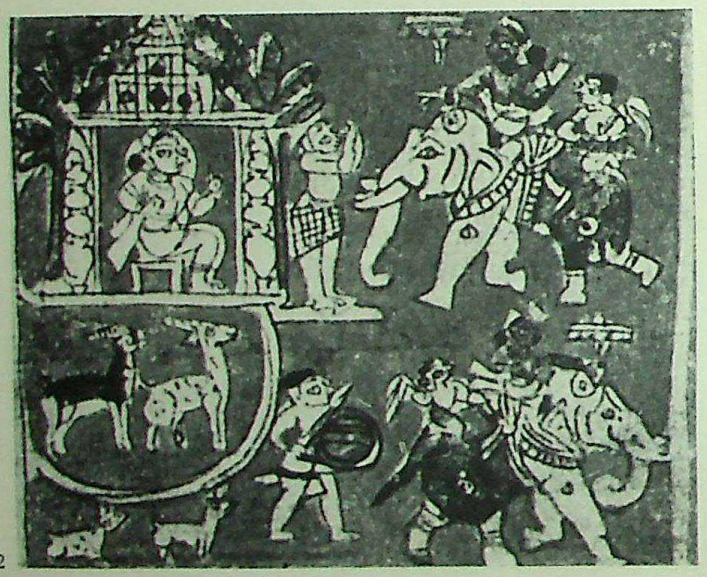
two or three episodes in the same miniature and showing the person involved in those episodes as many times. In the miniature depicting Neminath's marriage, Neminath is shown approaching the marriage pavilion and once again turning away from it (Fig. 22). Irrespective of these innovations, the format of the paintings remained the same. There was no attempt at enlarging the field of composition or at using the entire leaf surface in the same manner as the *patli* (*cf.* Figs. 18 and 19). The schema of illustrations continued to be conservative. In the treatment of human figures stylistic changes are discernible. The angular rendering is exaggerated further and the protrusion of the farther eye becomes pronounced. The washes of colour along outlines have lost their meaning and become mere cliches.

The tradition of Jain Painting, however, was slow in accepting and incorporating innovations and miniatures that signified the magical or devotional aspects of the text tended to be the preferred mode of illustration in holy texts until the end of this period.



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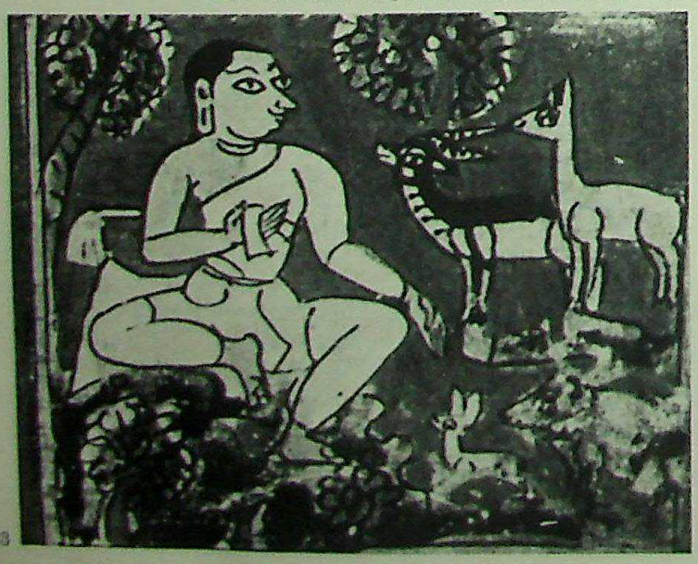

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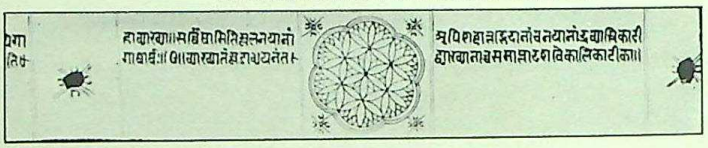

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ILLUSTRATIONS

1 Episodes from the life of Rishabha; wooden book-cover; *c.* 1100-1125 A.D.; Gujarat and Rajasthan; Western Indian Style
2 Auspicious Jain symbols; wooden book-cover; *c.* 1125-1150 A.D.; Gujarat and Rajasthan; Western Indian Style
3 Two folios: Shri and Kamadeva; Folio with colophon; *Oghaniryukti;* palm-leaf; dated 1060 A.D.; Gujarat and Rajasthan; Western Indian Style
4 Two folios: Tirthankara with devotees; Sarasvati with devotees; *Sardhashataka;* palm-leaf; *c.* 1125-1150 A.D.; Gujarat and Rajasthan; Western Indian Style
5 Monk with a devotee; *Mahavira-Charitra;* palm-leaf; dated 1185 A.D.; Gujarat and Rajasthan; Western Indian Style
6 The goddess Sarasvati; *Siddhahemashabdanushayana;* palm-leaf; *c.* 1200-1225 A.D.; Gujarat and Rajasthan; Western Indian Style
7 Tirthankara with attendants; *Nripadeshamala;* palm-leaf; *c.* 1175-1200 A.D.; Gujarat and Rajasthan; Western Indian Style
8 Elephant – detail of Fig. 3; *Oghaniryukti;* palm-leaf; dated 1060 A.D.; Gujarat and Rajasthan; Western Indian Style
9 Gajalakshmi; *Pravachana-Saroddhar-Vriti-Saha;* palm-leaf; dated 1377 A.D.; Gujarat and Rajasthan; Western Indian Style
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11 *Samavasarana;* palm-leaf; *c.* 1375-1400 A.D.; Gujarat and Rajasthan; Western Indian Style
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13 Floral Meander; wooden book-cover; *c.* 1100-1125 A.D.; Gujarat and Rajasthan; Western Indian Style
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19 Episodes from the life of Parshva; palm-leaf manuscript; *c.* 1275-1300 A.D.; Gujarat and Rajasthan; Western Indian Style
20 A goddess with *chauri* bearers; *Shatkhandagam;* palm-leaf; *c.* 1112-1120 A.D.; Karnataka; Western Indian Style
21 Vidyadevis; wooden book-cover; *c.* 1125-1150 A.D.; Eastern India; Western Indian Style
22,23 Two folios: Marriage of Nemi; Monk preaching to animals; *Subahu-Katha;* palm-leaf; dated *c.* 1288 A.D.; Gujarat and Rajasthan; Western Indian Style
24 Detail, palm-leaf folio; *c.* 1125-1150 A.D.; Gujarat and Rajasthan; Western Indian Style

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Regional Interpretations: 1350-1550 A.D.

Through the high Himalayan passes the Islamic invaders rode down to the plains of India. Fired with fanatic zeal they came to plunder and to convert the infidels. They attacked viciously and returned to their homeland in triumph, laden with booty and slaves. They came again and again, striking audaciously, and leaving a trail of destruction and desolation behind them. Although these forays led to some territorial annexations in the frontier regions, Muslim rule was not established in India until almost two hundred years later. In A.D. 1192, at the second battle of Tarain, the Muslim hordes defeated the Indian armies and swept across the Gangetic plain, asserting their supremacy over the land. Their authority in the conquered country was somewhat precarious at first; the core of the Delhi Sultanate consisted merely of Delhi and its environs. But over the decades the foreign rulers consolidated their position and, under Ala-ud-din Khalji (A.D. 1296-1316) and Muhammad-bin-Tughluq (A.D. 1325-1351), the Muslim empire covered almost all of India. The Imperial glory, however, was shortlived: the Khalji empire lasted less than twenty years while that of Tughluq did not endure more than a decade. The Delhi Sultanate began to crumble and towards the end of the fourteenth century it was no more than a hollow symbol of the Muslim empire, functioning solely in name. In A.D. 1399, it finally splintered under the impact of Timur's assault.

The political disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate into several smaller kingdoms was disastrous in many ways, but for the arts it proved quite beneficial. For, until A.D. 1399, there was only one dominant court—that of Delhi—which could extend encouragement to the various artistic expressions. Its patronage was necessarily limited in character and in extent. With the formation of smaller kingdoms—Muslim as well as Hindu—new centres were established and, under the aegis of the ruling elite, the arts received great impetus. Scholars, literati, musicians, artists and architects flocked to these courts. As a result, the fifteenth century witnessed the efflorescence of regional idioms of artistic expression; new styles emerged and existing forms received fresh vitality.

The policies of the new rulers affected Jain art inasmuch as they regulated, directly or indirectly, the patronage that the Jains could bestow on the different art forms. In the newly formed Hindu kingdom of Gwalior the environment was extremely conducive to religious activity and the Digambara Jains therefore not only commissioned copies of their religious texts, they even ordered large statues to be sculpted on the rocky sides of the fortified hill in Gwalior town. However, in states governed by Muslim heads, such as Gujarat and Delhi, the Jain merchants and bankers considered it expedient to be less overt in their religious expression. In those days of uncertain religious toleration they chose to pour their piety and wealth into unobtrusive works of art, commissioning copies of cannonical literature which could be executed secretly and stored away safely. Among the Jains of both sects, it was the Shvetambara Jain community in Gujarat that patronised this art form extensively. A vast number of their religious texts, transcribed during the fifteenth century in Gujarat, have survived because they were carefully kept and protected. Sometimes they were preserved in underground chambers and thus escaped destruction even when the enemy razed the temples to the ground. Several of these documents were written in gold or silver ink and many were embellished with illustrations.

As in the preceding period, the tradition of Jain manuscript illustration continued to manifest itself through the Western Indian Style of painting. But this pan-Indian style was losing its integrated character and rapidly fragmenting into regional idioms—an inevitable stage, perhaps, in the growth pattern of any art form. Between

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A.D. 1350 and 1550, the Western Indian Style split into two distinct stylistic idioms—one of which was localised in Gujarat and Rajasthan and the other in Delhi and Gwalior. The western variant is refined in its execution and the broad spectrum of its palette is enriched by silver and gold. The northern variant, on the other hand, is somewhat rougher and yet more vigorous. A comparison between the two shows that the latter is, without doubt, closer in spirit and execution to the style prevalent during A.D. 1050-1350.

Between A.D. 1350-1550 Indian Miniature Painting also found articulation in another pictorial mode—the *Chaurapanchashika* Style. A vital and deeply felt expression, it presents a sharp contrast to the esoteric and iconographic preoccupations that characterise the Western Indian Style. The Jain tradition employs both the Western Indian Style as well as the *Chaurapanchashika* Style for illustrating its religious texts.

One of the important developments during the period under discussion was the extensive use of paper as a carrier of illustrated manuscripts. Paper, though rare, was not entirely new to the tradition; it had been employed occasionally for the purpose of transcribing texts as early as the twelfth century A.D. But somehow palm-leaf continued to be the preferred medium for copying manuscripts until the end of the fourteenth century. Once paper found acceptance, however, it rapidly replaced palm-leaf as the material on which texts were written and illustrated.

Paper manuscripts were modelled on palm-leaf prototypes and, in the initial stages, paper folios conformed to the proportions of palm-leaf folios. Furthermore, paper manuscripts adhered to the system followed in palm-leaf manuscripts in aspects such as: the division of the folio into two columns with narrow vertical margins; the writing of the text in lines across the folio; and the placement of page numbers. Similarly, the practice of marking stringholes was continued even though paper manuscripts were seldom threaded together. Later, during the fifteenth century, when the potential of the new material was realised and fully grasped, the conventional form of manuscript presentation changed. The folios became shorter and broader without abandoning the *pothi* format, the stringholes performed a decorative function and page numbers were now indicated in the lower right-hand corner of the folio.

The work on an illustrated manuscript began with the clear demarcation of areas for the text as well as for the paintings. It is not known exactly who conceived this scheme—whether it was the master artist or the scribe. However, it would be logical to conclude that the scribe assumed this responsibility, for, occasionally, in the margins, there is either a brief caption or a little sketch indicating the subject to be portrayed in the illustration. Actually, this practice seems to have its antecedants in the earlier period, judging from its occurrence in a few palm-leaf manuscripts of the late thirteenth century. At the end of the text, the scribe often included a colophon with such relevant information as: the donor and his genealogy, the names of the preceptor and the pontiffs, the date of copying and, on rare occasions, the place where it was copied. Such colophons often ended with the scribe's remark, "I have written as I have seen, and therefore am not to be blamed for the mistakes in the text." After the scribe completed his assignment, the manuscript was turned over to the artist. The illustrator proceeded in a methodical manner, beginning with the first illustration and fully completing it before embarking on the next one. Except for an occasional lapse, the painter worked on the illustrations in a sequential order. If, for some reason, the process of painting was not begun, or if it was interrupted, the areas reserved for illustrations remained empty. The completed manuscript was inserted between covers which were sometimes quite ornamental and fashioned from precious materials embossed with auspicious motifs. Sometimes several manuscripts were stored in wooden boxes with decorative lacquer-work.

Western Indian Style

Gujarat and Rajasthan

The region of Gujarat had been under Muslim domination since A.D. 1298. It was a wealthy province with busy ports engaged in flourishing foreign trade with Arabia, Persia and other countries. The Jains played an important role in the economic and commercial activities of the region and contributed greatly to its prosperity.

Manuscript illustration in western India had, from its inception, found expression in the Western Indian Style. This style had developed steadily through the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. While some innovations, such as the introduction of the narrative element, had taken place there had been no significant transformations in line, form or colour. Around the middle of the fourteenth century, however, the style unexpectedly swung out from its course, exhibiting a sudden and marked improvement in its workmanship (Figs. 1, 2, 4; pp. 103-120, Figs. 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 14, 16, 20, 22; pp. 121-132, Figs. 4-6, 9-12). Though still within the framework of the Western Indian Style, with its angular rendering and protruding farther eye, the paintings executed after A.D. 1350 projected a new awareness of stylistic form. The line, once taut, now becomes smooth and flowing, increasingly fluent in its articulation. The palette is variegated; it includes a wide spectrum of colours accentuated by touches of gold and silver. The most notable change occurs

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in the manner in which the composition of the paintings is conceived and in the competent relationship established within its constituent components. The content of the paintings is now concerned with the narrative rather than the iconographical aspect of the text; connected episodes are often grouped together in a single illustration – a device which lends an element of continuity to the narrative (Figs. 1, 2). The architecture is elaborately depicted with turretted pavilions and ornate woodwork, undoubtedly reflecting the prevailing styles in the monuments of Gujarat. The richly appointed interiors contain beautiful textile canopies, items of furniture as well as objects of everyday use such as spitoons and trays. Contemporary trends are also reflected in the apparel: the exquisite fabrics display tie-dye patterns in dots and stripes as well as block-printed or woven designs with rows of motifs such as geese and elephants. Although no textiles from the period have been preserved in India, some fragments discovered in Fustat, Egypt, show identical motifs, indicating thereby that these fabrics were imported from Gujarat. The compositions of these miniatures, inspite of all the innovations, are not free from hieratic elements. They convey the importance of the main protagonist by portraying him in imposing proportions.

At first these advances in technique and handling were attributed to the changeover from the textured palm-leaf to the smooth surface of paper. But this observation cannot be sustained, because the same refinements occur in both palm-leaf and paper manuscripts of the period. Obviously, the texture of the carrier seems to have little bearing either on the fineness of the line or the finish. In fact, a more convincing explanation for the shift in style would be that it reflects a changed sensibility: the precision and elegance portrayed in these manuscripts are qualities which fulfilled a new need. Paper was not the cause of the artistic refinement but a part of it.

Interestingly, the new approach in style first manifested itself in themes that had not been illustrated earlier – in the Shvetambara texts of the *Kalpa-Sutra* (pp. 103-120, Figs. 1-26) and the *Kalakacharya-Katha* (pp. 121-132, Figs. 1-12). The first of these is a hagiographical work on the life of the Jain Tirthankaras and the second tells the story of Monk Kalaka who sought the aid of the Sahi kings –

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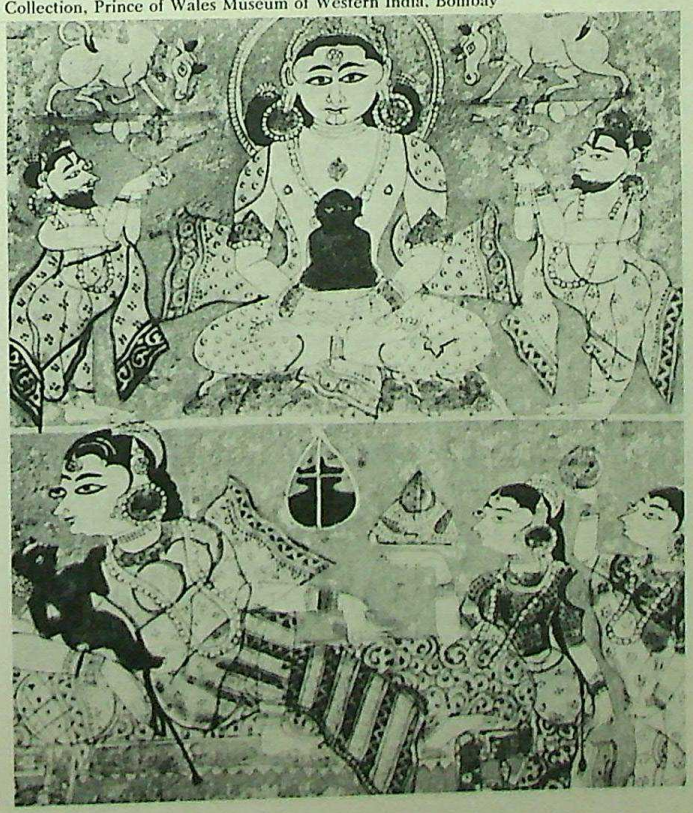

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foreigners from beyond the Indus – to defeat the evil forces of a local ruler. In order to represent the Sahi kings of the *Kalakacharya-Katha* in pictorial terms, the creation of a new figural type, attired in long robes and having the physiognomy of the Mongol race, became necessary (Fig. 3). The artist could have based this type on foreigners actually present at the court of the local Sultan. Alternatively, he may have appropriated it from an Islamic pictorial tradition. If so, it is not known whether the illustrator was exposed to this tradition through

Collection: Jain Bhandara, Jaisalmer

3

items of trade such as Iranian ceramic plates and bowls brought to the prosperous ports of Gujarat, or through Indo-Persian paintings executed in India for the Muslim Sultans and the cultured elite. Interestingly, the Sahi figures were seldom portrayed with the farther protruding eye.

As the refined version of the Western Indian Style moves into the fifteenth century, its intrinsic beauty begins to fade (Figs. 9, 13, 14; pp. 103-120, Figs. 2, 4, 8, 12, 13, 17-19, 21, 23-26; pp. 121-132, Figs. 2, 3, 7). After A.D. 1425 there is a perceptible decline in execution: the line loses its verve, the rendering becomes markedly angular and the protruding farther eye becomes very pronounced. The drawing of the attendant figures is careless and does not appear to be the work of the master artist but of his assistants. Even the compositions lack inventiveness and imagination: they are structured on solutions formulated when the style was at its most expressive and vibrant. In fact, the miniatures strike as being reduced to formulae, repeated over and over again with little variation. The more elaborately orchestrated miniatures owe their ornate appearance to the replication of various motifs – a device which does not add significantly to either the narrative or the pictorial content of the illustration. The polychromatic palette is now narrowed down to two basic colours: red and gold (pp. 103-109, Figs. 3, 8). The emphasis on gold led to a new technique which used gold-leaf instead of gold paint. The illustrator began work on a miniature by covering its entire area with a thin sheet of gold-leaf (pp. 107-111, Figs. 4, 13). He then proceeded to outline the human figures and other motifs in black ink. After the drawing was completed, the ground area was painted in red and the figures and motifs were treated as negative spaces in the compositions. The whole painting was enlivened with a few accents in other colours. Occasionally, the folios of the manuscript were adorned with decorative designs in the margins and the panels above and below the text (pp. 109, Fig. 8). The elaborate compositions and the rich palette symbolise a transition in taste and appear to be motivated by a sensibility which seeks increasingly rich and decorative effects. In response to the changing aesthetic, the artists devised new techniques but the coarsening of line and repetitiveness in the compositions are already symptomatic of a general decline in quality.

Around the middle of the fifteenth century, blue – ultramarine as well as lapiz – superseded red as the favoured colour in Jain miniatures (Figs. 7, 8, 13; pp. 107-116, Figs. 4, 11, 13, 17-19, 23, 24; p. 127, Fig. 7). The resultant blue and gold colour-scheme was not entirely new in concept; it had been occasionally employed in the early decades of the fifteenth century. But after A.D. 1450 it became ubiquitous. Miniatures painted in the style created dazzling effects and had an instant appeal. Often the folios of such manuscripts were further embellished with intricate scroll-work along the margins and around each vestigial stringhole which had now assumed a diamond shape (Fig. 9; p. 112, Fig. 18). Not surprisingly, more and more Jains commissioned manuscripts in this colour-scheme. And yet, the rich and complex appearance of manuscripts painted in the closing decades of the century is only superficially striking: otherwise the line is brittle, the drawing is poor and the compositions are crowded with redundant details.

The desire for sumptuous design and ostentatious effects culminates in a corpus of documents described as "opulent." They stand slightly apart from the rest of the manuscripts because, in addition to being adorned with miniatures painted in blue and gold, they are also written in gold or silver ink and embellished with decorative panels along all four edges of each folio as well as the central margin (Figs. 7, 8; pp. 110-111, Fig. 11; p. 137, Fig. 5).

The early documents in the opulent group belong to the

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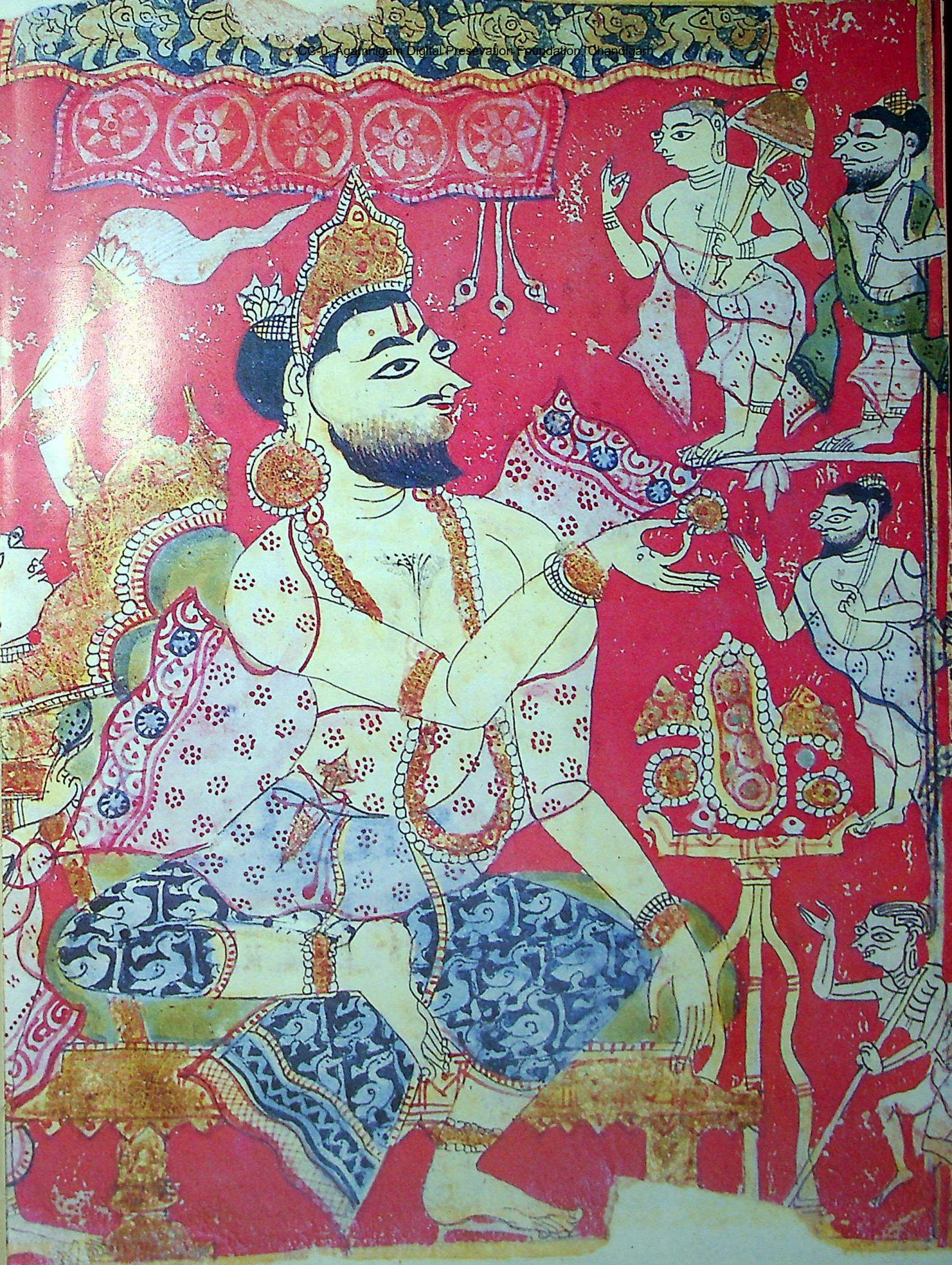

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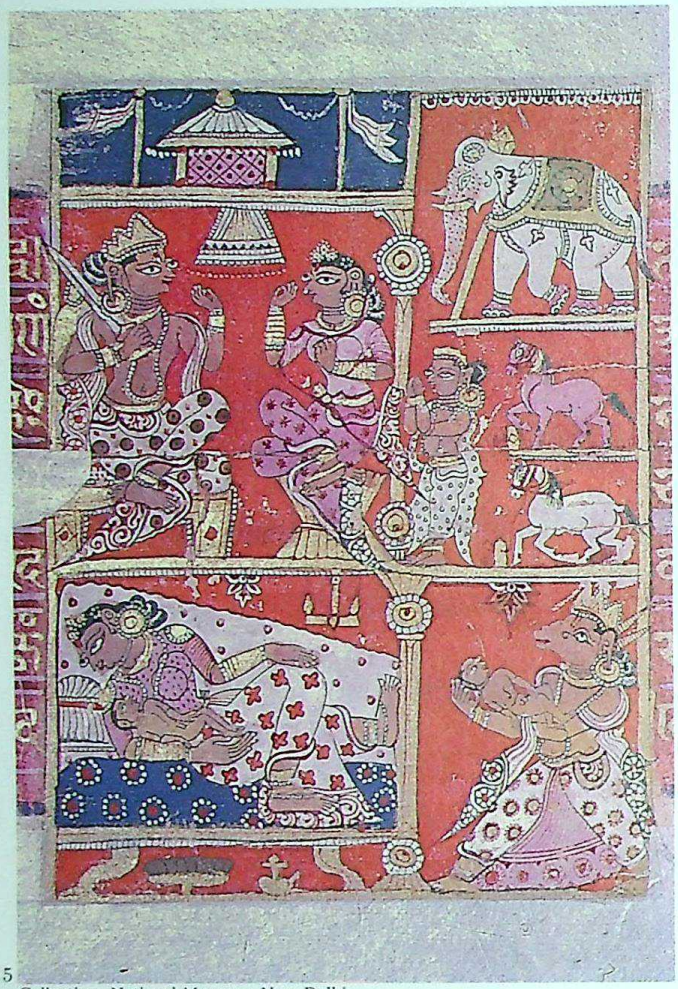

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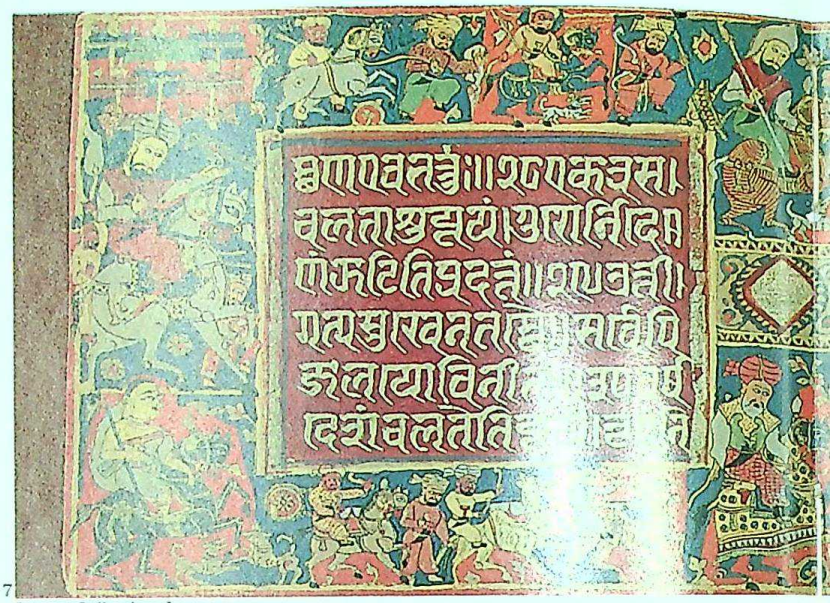

7 Private Collection, Jamnagar

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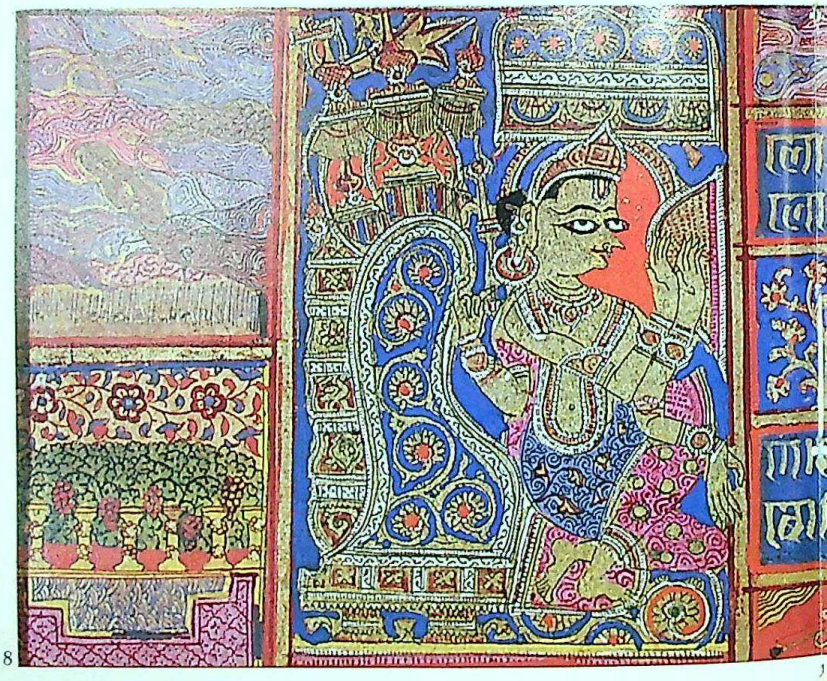

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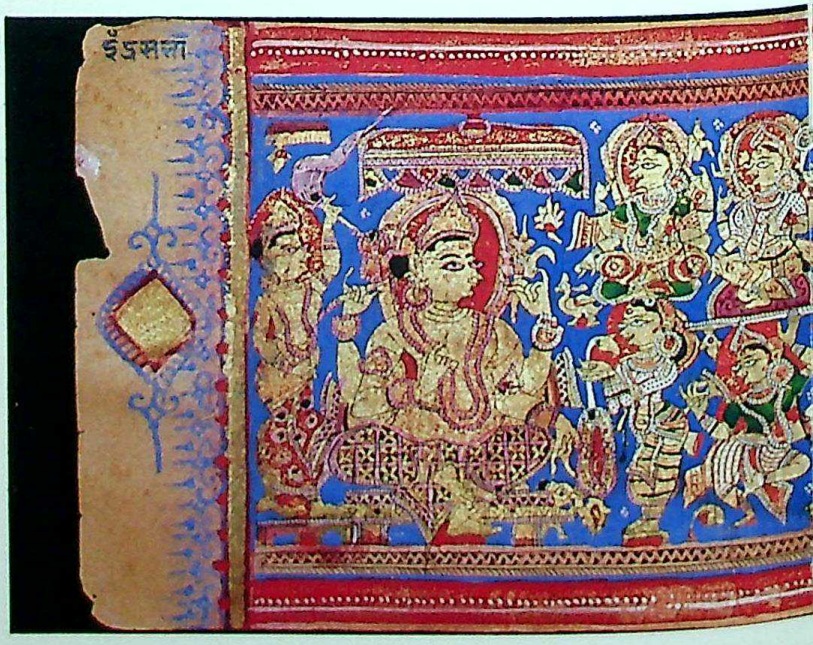

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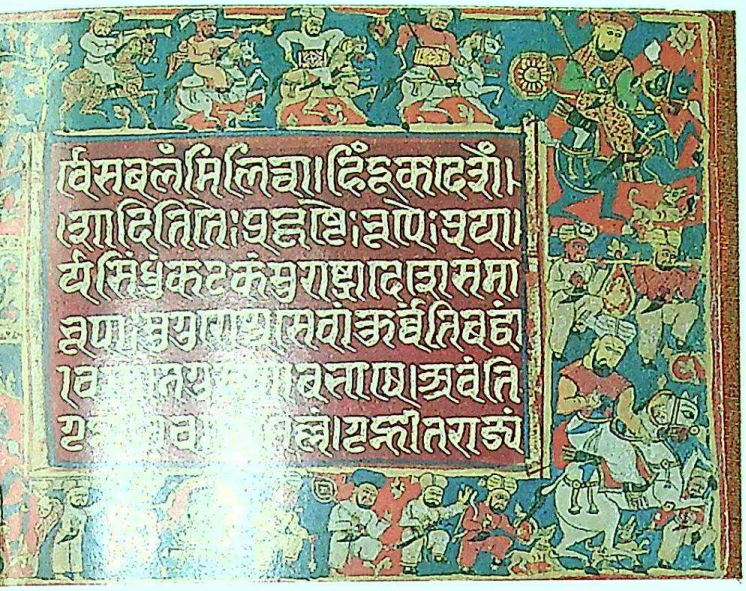

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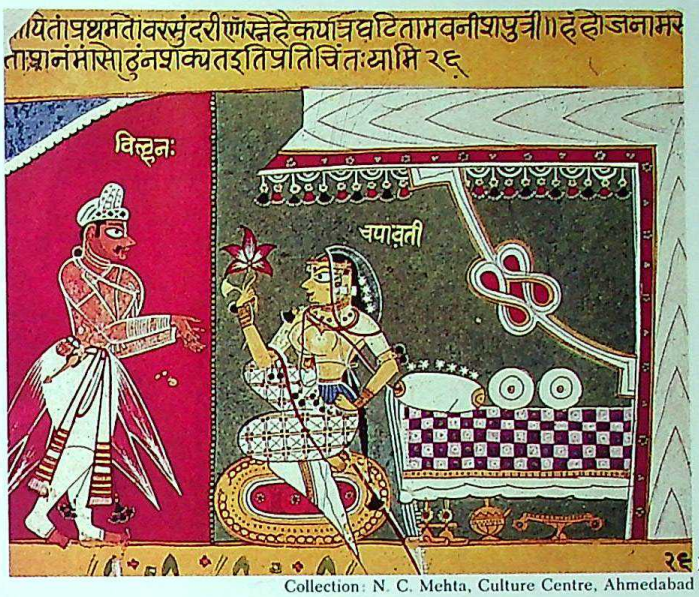

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opening years of the fifteenth century (Fig. 15). They exhibit borders consisting of simple floral and geometrical motifs on all four sides of the folio. Later, after the middle of the fifteenth century, the border-decorations become more complex, depicting flowering creepers, birds and animals. Occasionally, these panels illuminated the subject-matter in the text, or augmented the theme of the miniature placed on the same folio (p. 137, Fig. 5). As hieratic considerations did not operate in these panels, the illustrators generally took the opportunity to feature interesting subjects such as dancers, musicians, wrestlers and animal trainers (Fig. 16). Sometimes they would show lovers seated in a garden or bathing in a stepped pool. At other times the artist borrowed and improvised on motifs from contemporary architecture — or from those occurring in Islamic carpets and indigenous textiles. In a large number of manuscripts from this group, the text is written in gold either on red or black ground, heightening their grandeur.

Absolutely unsurpassed in this group of documents is the manuscript of the Devasano Pado *Kalpa-Sutra* and *Kalakacharya-Katha* (Figs. 8, 13, 16; pp. 110-111, Fig. 11; p. 124, Fig. 3). It contains many miniatures and its folios, written in gold, have splendid border-decorations which show sailing ships, rain-clouds, scenes from Persian fables, Persian horse-riders and animal trainers. There can be little doubt that these borders feature soldiers as well as the royal retainers of the Muslim Sultan of Gujarat. Since the manner of depicting these figures closely parallels that of Persian documents, it would seem that at least some of the illustrators had access to painted manuscripts executed either in a Persian idiom or a close derivative of it. In the latter case it would be a manuscript in the Indo-Persian style, manufactured locally for the delectation of Muslim kings and their grandees. Curiously, the border panels of the Devasano Pado manuscript as well as of many other documents of the opulent group do not employ the colour gold in their palette. In fact, these panels, with their intricate designs and bright pigments, serve as a perfect foil for the blue and gold illustrations on the same folio.

After this magnificent and extravagant document, the style of painting in western India, which had been steadily deteriorating in terms of line and compositional values, degenerates visibly. It maintains the blue and gold palette but the paintings are dull and fatigued: it has no new statements to make and, emptied of all content, moves gradually and mechanically into the sixteenth century. Incidentally, the blue and gold palette, because of its close association with the *Kalpa-Sutra* text became identified with it and, for the next three hundred years, was considered to be the most appropriate vehicle for illustrating that specific theme (p. 112, Fig. 15).

The blue and gold version of the Western Indian Style was also utilised to illuminate a Digambara Jain text from this region (p. 137, Fig. 5). Executed in A.D. 1494, probably in Karamsad (near Baroda), this Digambara manuscript illustrates the legend of King Yashodhara. In style, conception and execution it is identical to contemporary Shvetambara works from the opulent group. The Western Indian Style of painting was also employed in the illustration of Hindu texts on the Krishna theme as well as a secular poem called *Vasanta-Vilasa* describing the spring season. These documents confirm that though the Western Indian Style found its fullest and most prolific expression in the manuscripts of the Shvetambara Jains it served also as the style and pictorial idiom of the region.

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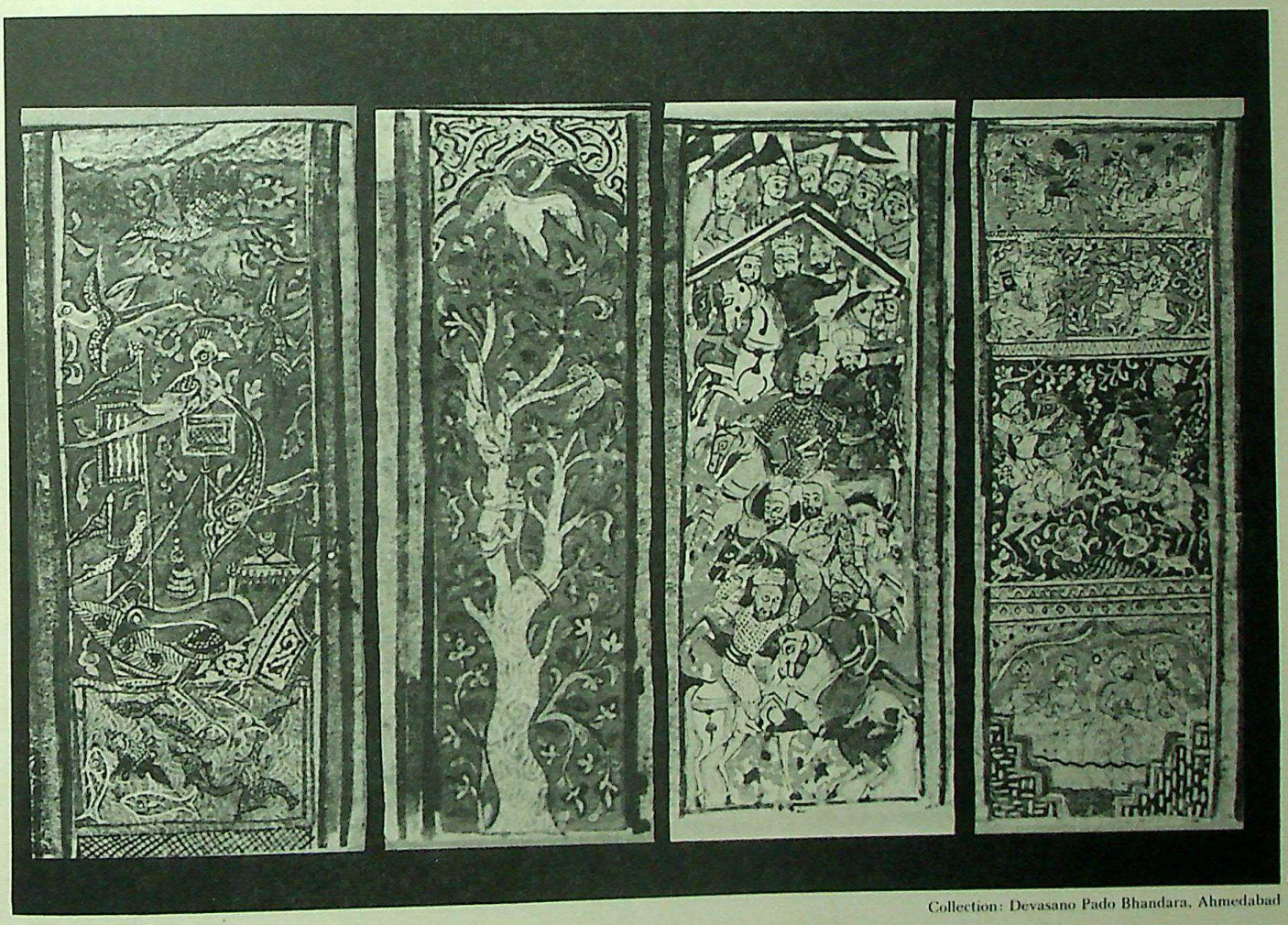

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Collection: Devasano Pado Bhandara, Ahmedabad

Stylistic Extensions:

The texts of the *Kalpa-Sutra* and the *Kalakacharya-Katha* were often transcribed together in one manuscript. Illustrated versions of these themes were executed for lay votaries of the Shvetambara sect in areas distant from Gujarat and Rajasthan. There are two dated examples from Delhi (Fig. 6; p. 122, Fig. 1), three documents from Mandu including a *Kalpa-Sutra* dated A.D. 1439, and two from Jaunpur, one of which was executed in A.D. 1465. Though painted outside Gujarat and Rajasthan, these manuscripts fall within the definitions of the style current in the western region. In fact, they can be termed as stylistic extensions of that province. It is only in certain aspects, such as the shape of the face, the manner in which the costumes are worn, the textile patterns or the architectural ornamentation, that the regional elements can be discerned in some of these manuscripts. But these regional differences are overshadowed by stylistic and iconographical considerations.

Of the documents painted outside Gujarat, the *Kalpa-Sutra* dated A.D. 1439 and executed at Mandu (Fig. 5), the *Kalakacharya-Katha* attributed to Mandu *c.* A.D. 1440 (Fig. 12) and the *Kalpa-Sutra* executed in Jaunpur in A.D. 1465 (Fig. 11) are extremely significant in terms of the developments that were taking place in the sphere of Indian Miniature Painting. For they, more than any other Shvetambara Jain manuscript, reflect in their execution – particularly in the rendition of the human figures and in the treatment of the landscape – the influence of a new stylistic vision.

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Western Indian Style

Delhi-Gwalior

If there was a tradition of painting in the northern plains of India before and during the fifteenth century almost no evidence of it has survived Timur Lane's inhuman devastation of Delhi. The only document that escaped destruction, probably because it was in the possession of some itinerant monk, is a Shvetambara Jain text of the *Kalakacharya-Katha* painted on paper at Delhi in A.D. 1366 (p. 122, Fig. 1). This manuscript reveals a style that is consistent with the contemporary expression in Gujarat and Rajasthan.

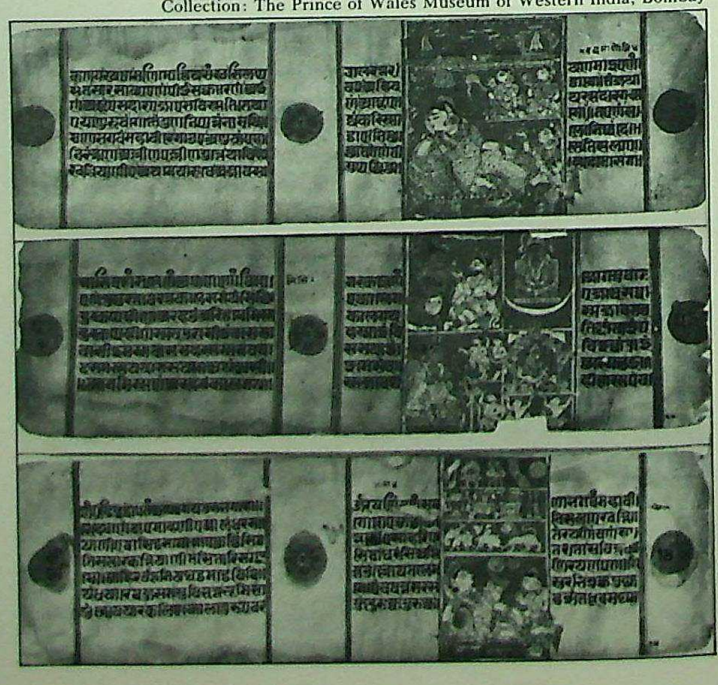
More illuminating, in terms of the style that may have existed in northern India during the fourteenth century, is a manuscript of the *Adi-Purana* executed in A.D. 1404 at Delhi for the Digambara Jains (Figs. 19, 22). Unfortunately, only one illustration – the first one – is painted. For some reason the painter was unable to proceed with his task and the spaces demarcated for receiving illustration in the remaining 257 folios of the manuscript are blank. Despite this deficiency, the manuscript gives the impression of being different from its coeval counterparts in western India (Figs. 17 and 18). The most noticeable departure is in the manner in which the textual and illustrated areas are organised on each folio. The schema of illustrations – namely the number of illustrations, their sizes and their placement on the folios – is unusual. For example, the number of illustrations planned in this manuscript exceed, by far, that of any document from western India. Then again, the sizes of illustrations show considerable variation in contrast to the standardised formats typical of works from western India. Finally, unlike the illustrated texts from Gujarat and Rajasthan, the miniatures are not placed on the left and/or the right side of the folio but are grouped in a flexible manner: the arrangement changes from one folio to the next.

Obviously, the stylistic forces at work in this manuscript are different from those operating in western India and this deduction is supported by the illustration. The single miniature reveals an uncluttered composition delineated in a crude but cursive line and painted in a palette which is restricted chiefly to primary colours. Clearly, the style of the pictorial expression in this miniature has little in common with the refined idiom prevalent in western India at that time. Rather, the style here is analogous to that of the foregoing phase of Indian Miniature Painting – the style used in illustrated palm-leaf manuscripts and wooden book-covers during A.D. 1050-1350 (pp. 35-42, Figs. 1, 7, 14, 16, 17). The *Adi-Purana* of A.D. 1404, in fact, represents a further stage in the progression of the style of painting that evolved in Gujarat and Rajasthan during A.D. 1050-1350.

The discovery of this and other manuscripts from the region of Delhi and Gwalior prove that two distinct variants of the Western Indian Style existed in the fifteenth century – one in western India and the other in northern India. The version in northern India perpetuates the earlier tradition whereas the variant in Gujarat and Rajasthan actually represents a departure from it. In other words, the style of painting that operated during A.D. 1050-1350 in western India does not continue in the same region, as would be expected, but in a distant province in northern India – in Delhi and Gwalior.

A more complete picture of the style in Delhi is evident in the fragmentary *Maha-Purana* in the collection of the Digambara Jain Naya Mandir, Old Delhi (Fig. 20; pp. 94-96, Figs. 19, 23). Executed *c.* A.D. 1420, its schema of illustrations resembles that of the 1404 *Adi-Purana* (Fig. 18) but reflects a more inhibited and conservative approach. Its numerous illustrations are in complete accord with the conventions of the Western Indian Style as it prevailed in Gujarat and Rajasthan between A.D. 1050 and 1350 – they do not seek brilliant effects nor do they linger over preciousness in technique. In comparison to concurrent manuscripts from Gujarat and Rajasthan, the style of the Naya Mandir *Maha-Purana* appears coarse, its line hasty, its execution rough and its colour-scheme limited to a few colours painted against a red ground. The compositions, though larger, are

Collection: The Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay



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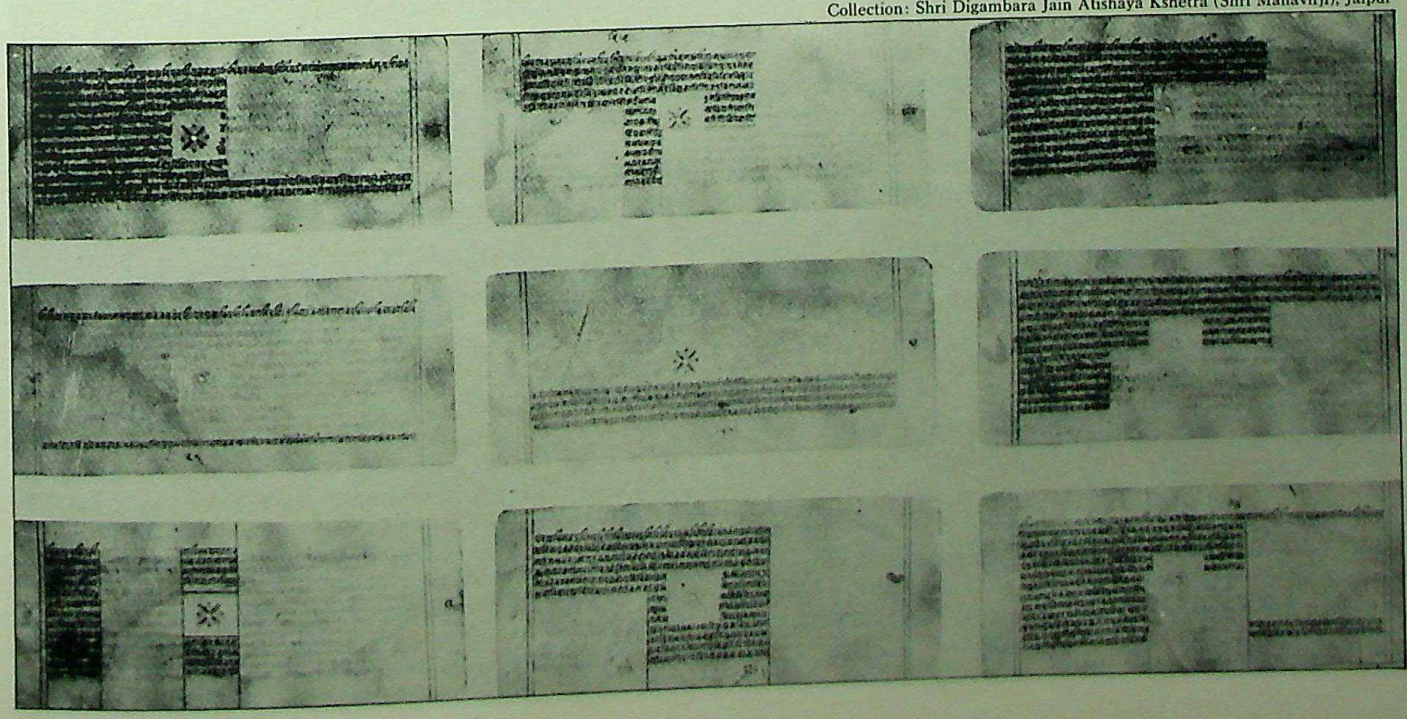
simpler, less crowded and devoid of excessive detail. And yet, they are imbued with movement and are characterised by a vigour that is lacking in the agitated elegance of manuscripts from western India. In addition to these major stylistic divergences, minor departures can be noted in the textile patterns and costume designs, as well as in the style of architecture and the structure of chariots. Though insignificant in themselves, together these discrepancies are an eloquent testimony of regional variation; they not only serve to define a local idiom but also give it an identity.

That the Naya Mandir *Maha-Purana* style of painting extended from Delhi to Gwalior is attested by a manuscript of the *Pasanaha-Chariu,* dated A.D. 1441 and painted at Gwalior (Figs. 21, 24, 25). In its schema of illustrations and compositions this manuscript is a more static counterpart of the style in Delhi. In the rendering of the figures, however, there is a significant development: not only do they have squarish faces but the farther eye is no longer an organic part of the face and appears to be merely attached to it. The costumes worn by women do not consist of a *dhoti,* a *choli* and an *odhni* but reveal an ensemble comprising a *choli* and a *sari* which is pleated in the front and its end passed over the head and across the chest in a broad band. Some of the men are attired in an outfit consisting of a *jama* and *paijama* — items of dress not encountered in contemporary paintings of Gujarat and Rajasthan except in the depiction of the Sahis who belonged to a foreign ethnic group and wore the outfit as their native costume. In addition to the figural types, there is also a deviation in the portrayal of the landscape — particularly in the depiction of the sky as a blue band with a white edging and trees with leaves arranged in rows.

The *Pasanaha-Chariu* features a text written by the celebrated poet, Raidhu, who lived in Gwalior during the fifteenth century. Three other manuscripts illustrating Raidhu's works are executed in essentially the same style as the *Pasanaha-Chariu* and can therefore be assigned to the Delhi-Gwalior region *c.* A.D. 1440-1460 (Figs. 26-28). Of these, two are versions of the *Jasahara-Chariu.* One of them is dated A.D. 1454; its paintings seem to have a strange colour-scheme because the colour red, used extensively in the background of the miniatures, has flaked away (Fig. 28). The style of this manuscript, when compared to that of the *Pasanaha-Chariu,* appears dessicated. The third manuscript — the *Santinaha-Chariu* — is executed in a folkish version of the northern variant of the Western Indian Style (Fig. 27). Its miniatures exhibit a palette consisting chiefly of pink and blue-green. Though provincial in its expression, in the context of style this group of four manuscripts, painted *c.* A.D. 1440-1460 in the Delhi-Gwalior region, assumes great importance (Figs. 21, 24-28). For, it manifests many stylistic

Collection: Shri Digambara Jain Atishaya Kshetra (Shri Mahavirji), Jaipur



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features which find parallel in the styles of the Mandu *Kalpa-Sutra* of A.D. 1439 (Fig. 5) and the Jaunpur *Kalpa-Sutra* of A.D. 1465 (Fig. 11). The points of similarity are evident primarily in the treatment of the human figure – especially in terms of the squarish mould of the face with the long large eyes. The farther eye no longer forms an integral part of the countenance but is simply attached to it. The correspondences also extend to the postures of the figures and their costumes – in the sartorial styles of the *jama* and the *paijama* worn by the men as well as in the manner in which the women drape their *saris*. Strangely, the textiles depicted in this group appear coarse and substantially plain compared to the exquisitely patterned diaphanous fabrics encountered in contemporary paintings from Gujarat and Rajasthan. The relationship of the Delhi-Gwalior group with the Mandu and Jaunpur manuscripts is again reinforced in the rendering of the landscape, as well as that of certain architectural features such as turretted pavilions. Clearly, this cluster of manuscripts painted outside the region of Gujarat and Rajasthan – in Delhi-Gwalior as well as Mandu and Jaunpur – represents a generic group which is interrelated through stylistic affinities.

Now, in the manuscripts from Mandu and Jaunpur (Figs. 5, 11, 12), features such as the human figures with squarish faces and the attached farther eye, as well as the styles of dress, have been interpreted as representing the stirrings of a new expression and as foreshadowing the *Chaurapanchashika* Style (Fig. 10). Identical features occur in the coeval group of manuscripts from Delhi-Gwalior – albeit at a lower level of accomplishment (Figs. 21, 24-28). But, because of the derivative nature of the Delhi-Gwalior manuscripts they cannot ever be considered as the precursors of the *Chaurapanchashika* Style. When viewed from this perspective, the earlier hypothesis that the Mandu and Jaunpur manuscripts (Figs. 5, 11, 12) are the forerunners of the *Chaurapanchashika* Style is not convincing, for, they too appear to be tentative and derivative in character. Obviously, the unusual adumbrations visible in the style of the manuscripts from Delhi-Gwalior, Mandu and Jaunpur (Figs. 5, 11, 12, 21, 24-28) represent echoes and not origins of the *Chaurapanchashika* Style. And it is at this point that the relationship between hieratic art and non-hieratic art becomes relevant in the study of Jain Painting.

The *Chaurapanchashika* Style

In the *Chaurapanchashika* Style, the miniature form has found a new expression in a non-hieratic milieu (Fig. 10). It is a vibrant idiom with an assured line and a vivid palette of contrasting colours. The more accomplished documents of this style have an emotional content – an exciting change from the iconographical and cerebral bias characteristic of hieratic art. Although the rendering of the figures contains certain angularities, the farther protruding eye is now removed. The style derives its name from the *Chaurapanchashika* series – paintings illustrating verses sung by a lover to his beloved. The format of the paintings is almost square. The same style is modulated to suit the needs of a Muslim patron in the *Chandayan* series. These series show the *Chaurapanchashika* Style at its best, but other documents, including Jain manuscripts, indicate that it operated at various levels simultaneously and that not all documents incorporating this style reflect the same concern for high aesthetic values.

Although exactly when the style originated is not known, its earliest dated example appears in a set of book-covers enclosing a palm-leaf manuscript of the *Pingalatattvavyakhya* dated A.D. 1491-92 and attributed to north Bihar. However, several Jain manuscripts executed between A.D. 1430 and 1470 outside Gujarat and Rajasthan (Figs. 21, 24-28) exhibit certain stylistic affectations which indicate that the *Chaurapanchashika* Style may in fact have begun in some Hindu court *c.* A.D. 1425. One of the objections to this early date for the style revolves around the presense in these manuscripts of an item of dress worn by the male figures – the *chakdar jama*, a *jama* with pointed ends. The moot point in the argument about the period during which the *Chaurapanchashika* Style originated centres around whether or not the *chakdar jama* existed before Akbar came to the throne in A.D. 1556. Although this form of apparel occurs constantly in the painted documents of the Akbar period, it is absent in all dated documents, including those painted in the *Chaurapanchashika* Style, executed prior to his reign. On the basis of this evidence, scholars have concluded that any miniature depicting this attire could not have been painted earlier than A.D. 1550.

This view, however, is based on a narrow interpretation of the available data. Several documents in the *Chaurapanchashika* Style which depict the *chakdar jama*, though not dated, can be attributed on stylistic grounds to the Pre-Mughal period. And this would suggest that the *chakdar jama* was prevalent in certain Hindu and Muslim courts before Akbar came to the throne. Quite conceivably, the costume of the *atpati* turban and the *chakdar jama* that Akbar introduced to the Mughal court was a direct outcome of his marriage to the princess of Amer. In accordance with old Hindu customs, Akbar would have received costly gifts from the bride's family, including a resplendent outfit to wear at the wedding ceremony. And, Akbar, out of deference to his in-laws and as a diplomatic gesture towards his Hindu allies, could have adopted the Hindu costume. In fact, in the painting portraying Akbar ordering Adham Khan to be

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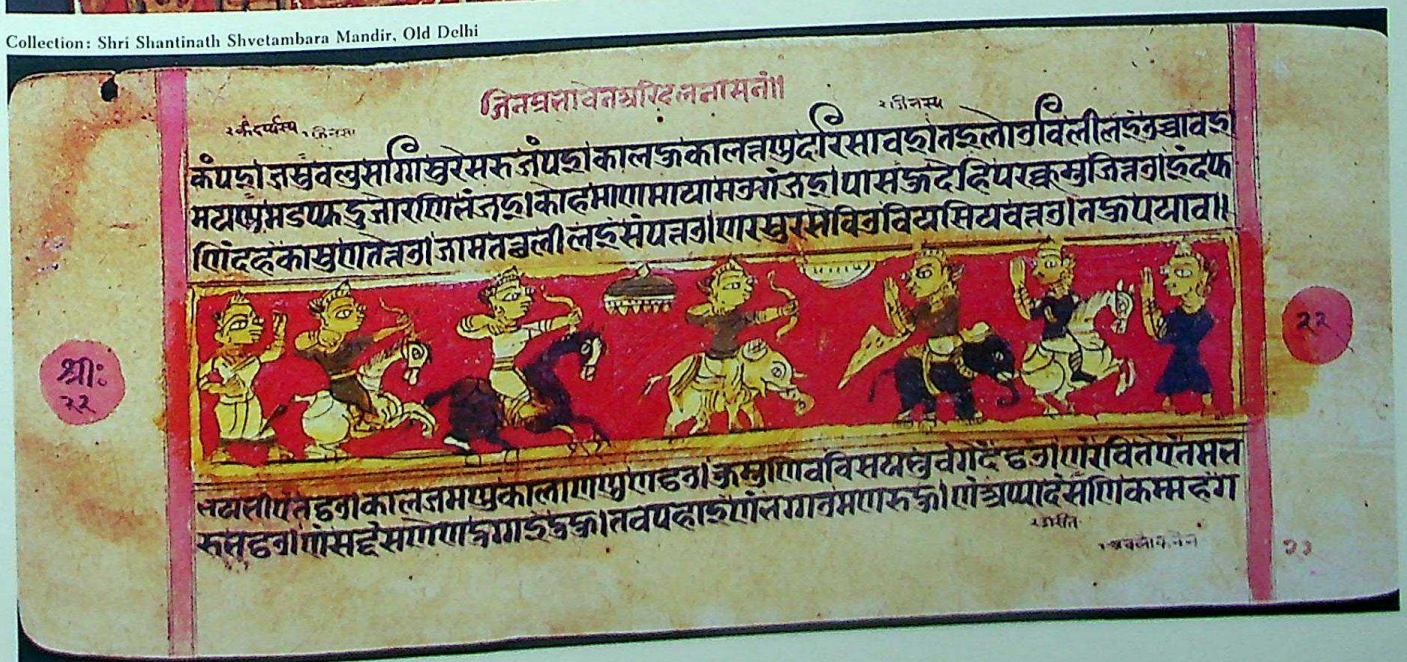
Collection: Shri Shantinath Shvetambara Mandir, Old Delhi



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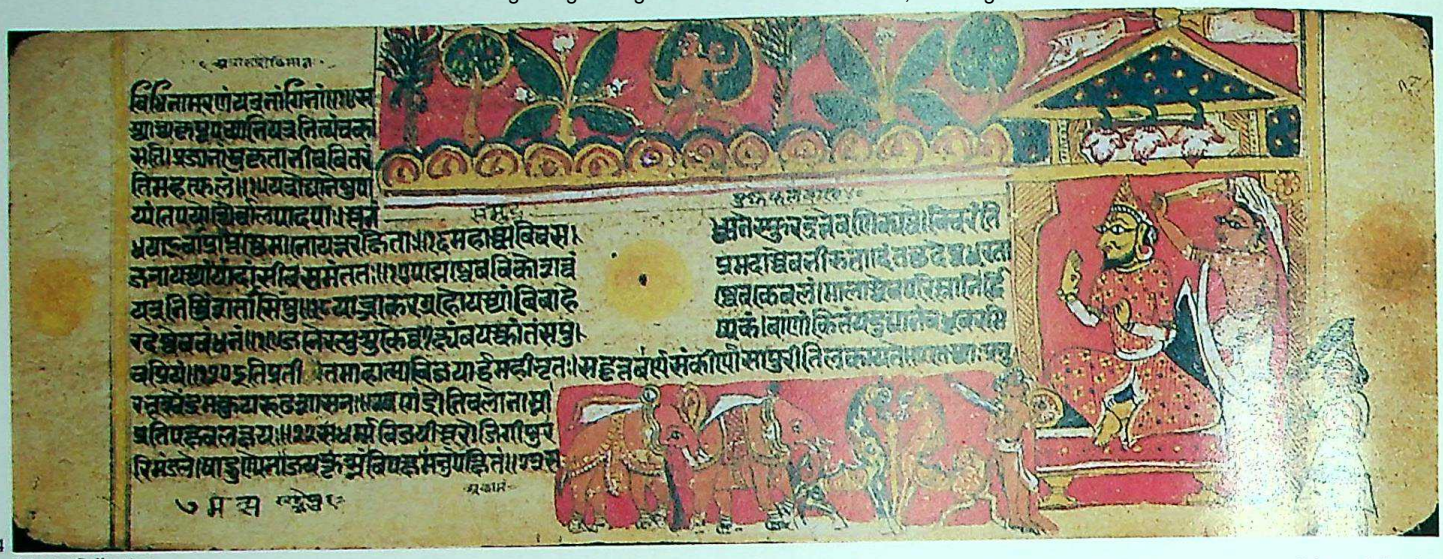

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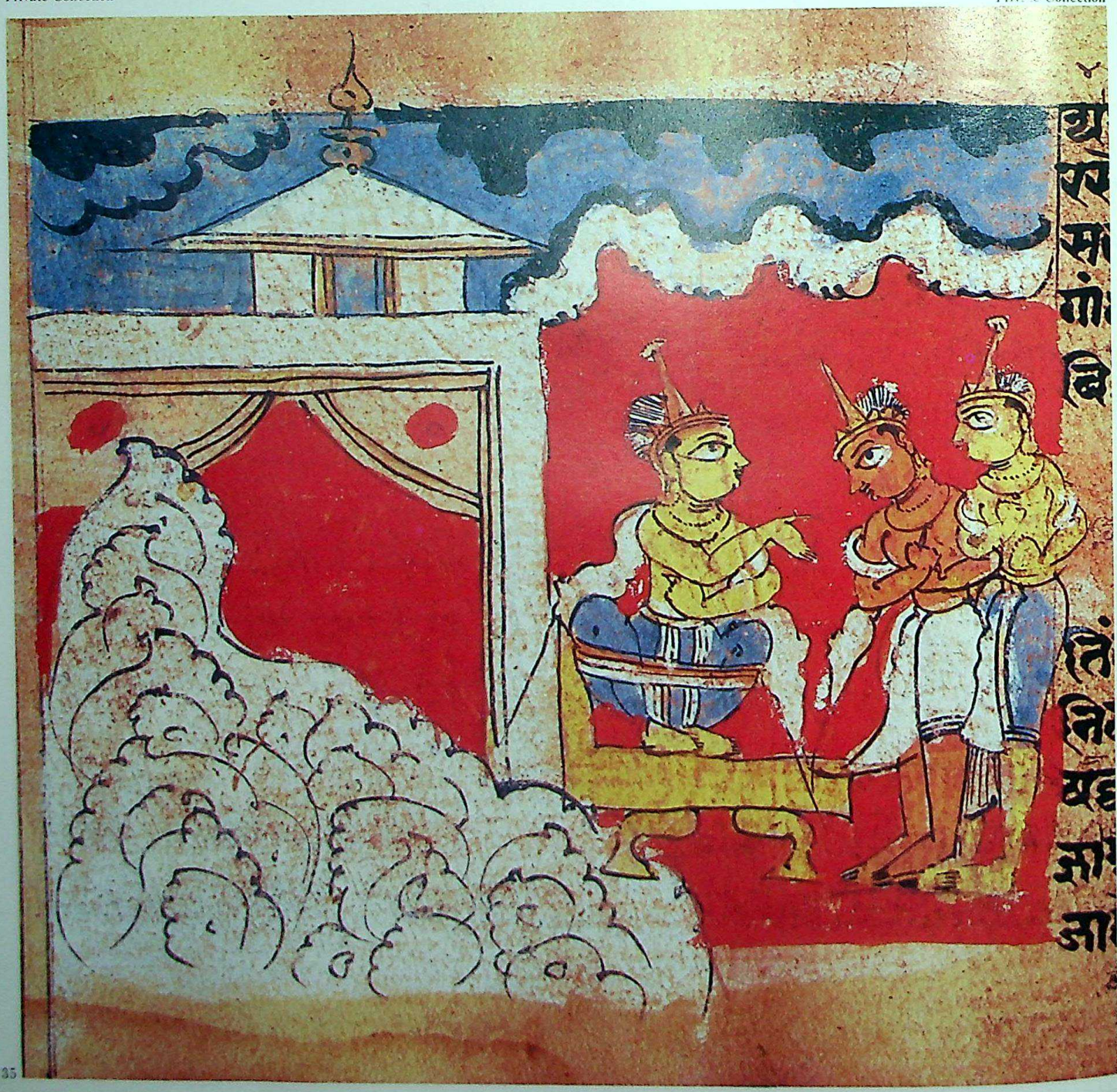

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thrown to his death, Akbar, who has just emerged from the harem apartments, is shown wearing an outfit which is identical to those seen in a manuscript of *Yashodhara-Charita* painted in Amer in A.D. 1590 (pp. 138-139, Fig. 13). This painting establishes that in the early years of his reign, Akbar was not averse to wearing a dress akin to that of the Hindus. Akbar's dress when compared with that of his father, Humayun, certainly appears to show Indian influence. Thus, there are valid reasons to assume that the *chakdar jama* was worn at various Hindu and Muslim courts before the advent of the Mughals. The presence or the absence of the *chakdar jama* should not be the criterion for determining the date of the emergence of the *Chaurapanchashika* Style. In all likelihood its beginnings lie in a Hindu court *c.* A.D. 1425.

Three Jain documents employ the *Chaurapanchashika* Style of painting. One of them, apparently an early document, is a Digambara Jain text of the *Adi-Purana*. Its numerous miniatures seem to have been painted at three separate periods of time in three different stylistic idioms. The first section contains miniatures executed in a mannered variant of the Naya Mandir *Maha-Purana* style (Figs. 29, 34; pp. 86-88, Figs. 1, 3, 4). It was presumably painted in Delhi *c.* A.D. 1425-50. The second section, executed in the *Chaurapanchashika* Style, exudes a vitality and freshness that, in the context of Indian Painting, can be certainly associated with the early stages of a stylistic expression. On these grounds it can be attributed to *c.* A.D. 1450-75 in the Delhi-Gwalior region (Figs. 30, 31, 35, 36; pp. 89-98, Figs. 5, 8, 25). The third section contains only a few folios with miniatures executed in an utterly impoverished style of the eighteenth century. The illustrative work on the final portion of the manuscript was never completed and the areas demarcated for illustration in the latter part of the text remain blank. This *Adi-Purana* manuscript is notable for its very imaginative schema of illustrations as also the depictions of the everyday life of each period. Several of the miniatures, in both the first and the second sections, portray not only episodes and events of the story, but also pictorially evoke the similes and metaphors employed in the narrative(Fig. 36). This method of illustrating text is also encountered in the miniatures of the Mewar School in the seventeenth century.

The other document in this style is the *Maha-Purana* of A.D. 1540 executed at Palam, near Delhi. Profusely illustrated, this manuscript reveals in its miniatures an exuberant and folkish version of the *Chaurapanchashika* Style (Fig. 32; pp. 89-102, Figs. 6, 7, 9-18, 20-22, 24, 26-28). The illustrations serve as graphic descriptive passages of contemporary conditions and customs in a palette of bright colours. This manuscript, executed for a member of the bourgeoisie, is an example of the *Chaurapanchashika* Style harnessed to a hieratic theme. In all probability, the artists who painted such documents specialised in expression at the manuscript level and were not capable of greater heights of achievement.

Very much in the style of the *Maha-Purana* of A.D. 1540 with its pert figures and bright colours is a cloth *pata* probably painted at Delhi *c.* A.D. 1525-1550. It is a cosmological diagram of the *Jambudvipa* with its continents separated by oceans teeming with large fish and dragons (Figs. 33, 34).

The fifteenth century was a period of great ferment in the history of Indian Miniature Painting. Regional factors exercised

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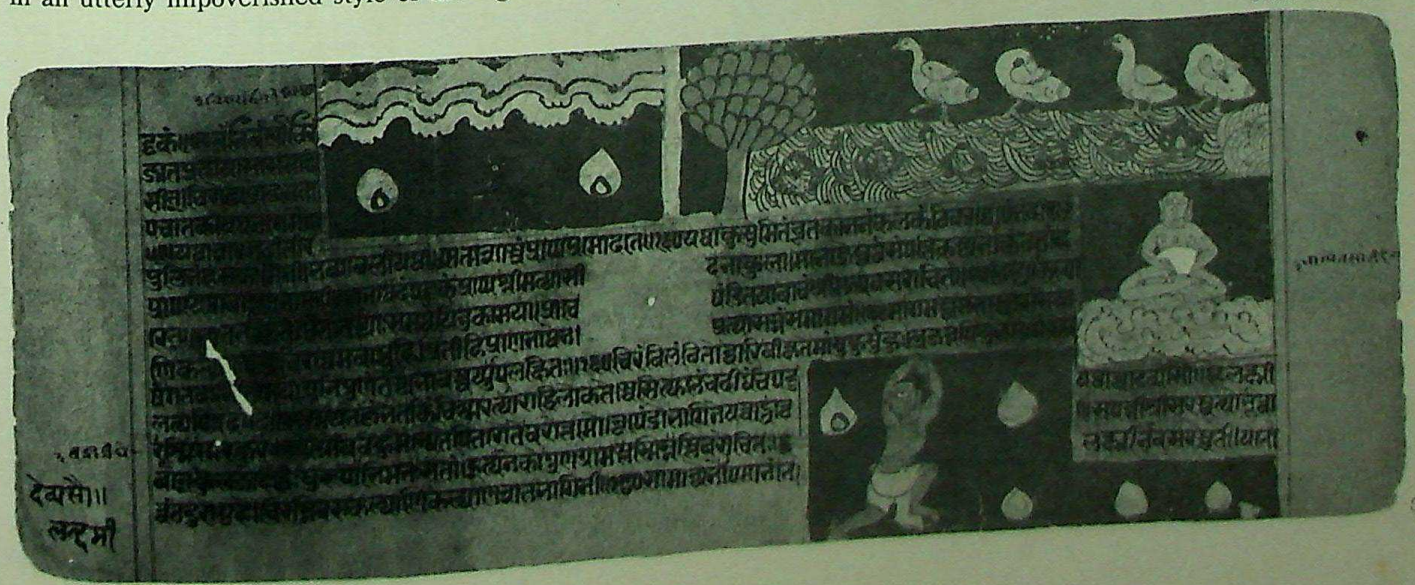

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a remarkable influence on the pictorial expression of the period often giving it a new direction. In the Western Indian Style of painting, these developments contributed to the formation of two distinct variants—one in Gujarat and Rajasthan and the other in the region of Delhi and Gwalior. In the wider context of Indian Miniature Painting the variant of the Western Indian Style in Gujarat and Rajasthan represents a tangential development shaped by specific considerations and motivations. It began with a flourish and sought lavish effects but these stylistic values left no lasting impression on later pictorial idioms. Thus, it is the Delhi-Gwalior variant that serves as the link between the palm-leaf period and the *Chaurapanchashika* Style.

Apart from the changes that occurred in the existing styles, this period is characterised by the emergence of new pictorial idioms in Hindu and Muslim courts. More often than not, these idioms were employed to illustrate secular themes and love poetry and were capable of conveying the mood evoked in the verses of the poems. This encouraged greater freedom of expression and contributed significantly towards the development of Indian Miniature Painting.

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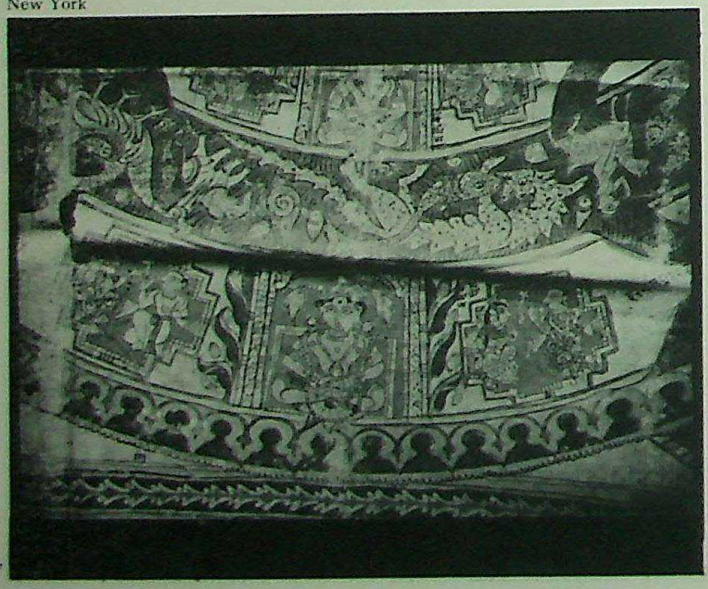

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ILLUSTRATIONS

1, 2 The *Panchakalyanaka* of Neminatha; *Kalpa-Sutra* and *Kalakacharya-Katha;* paper; *c.* 1375-1400 A.D.; Gujarat; Western Indian Style (Gujarat and Rajasthan)
3 Sahi chief and Kalaka; *Kalpa-Sutra* and *Kalakacharya-Katha;* paper; *c.* 1500 A.D.; Gujarat; Western Indian Style (Gujarat and Rajasthan)
4 Mahavira giving away his belongings; *Kalpa-Sutra* and *Kalakacharya-Katha;* paper; *c.* 1375-1400 A.D.; Gujarat; Western Indian Style (Gujarat and Rajasthan)
5 Exchange of embryos; Queen Trishala recounting the lucky dreams to King Siddhartha; *Kalpa-Sutra;* paper; executed in 1439 A.D. at Mandu (Malwa); central India; Western Indian Style (Gujarat and Rajasthan)
6 Birth of Mahavira; *Kalpa-Sutra;* paper; executed in 1466 A.D. at Delhi; north India; Western Indian Style (Delhi-Gwalior)
7 Folio depicting Jain monks and Sahi figures; *Kalakacharya-Katha;* paper; *c.* 1501 A.D.; Western Indian Style (Gujarat and Rajasthan)
8 Indra worships the Tirthankara's embryo; Devasano Pado *Kalpa-Sutra* and *Kalakacharya-Katha;* paper; *c.* 1500 A.D.; Gujarat; Western Indian Style (Gujarat and Rajasthan)
9 Indra's court; *Kalpa-Sutra* and *Kalakacharya-Katha;* paper; *c.* 1500 A.D.; Gujarat; Western Indian Style (Gujarat and Rajasthan)
10 Bilhana and Champavati; *Chaurapanchashika* series; paper; *c.* 1425-1500 A.D.; Mewar or Gwalior; *Chaurapanchashika* Style
11 Trishala watching a dance performance; *Kalpa-Sutra;* paper; executed in 1465 A.D. at Jaunpur (Uttar Pradesh); eastern India; Western Indian Style (Gujarat and Rajasthan)
12 Battle between Gardabhilla's forces and the Sahi kings; *Kalakacharya-Katha;* paper; *c.* 1440 A.D. ascribed to Mandu (Malwa); central India; Western Indian Style (Gujarat and Rajasthan)
13 Bahubali's austerities; Devasano Pado *Kalpa-Sutra* and *Kalakacharya-Katha;* paper; *c.* 1500 A.D.; Gujarat; Western Indian Style (Gujarat and Rajasthan)
14 Meditating figure; *Uttaradhyana-Sutra;* paper; *c.* 1450 A.D.; probably Cambay; Western Indian Style (Gujarat and Rajasthan)
15 Kalaka with Sahi chieftain; *Kalakacharya-Katha;* paper; *c.* 1425 A.D.; probably Anhilwarpatan (Gujarat); Western Indian Style (Gujarat and Rajasthan)
16 Border decorations; Devasano Pado *Kalpa-Sutra* and *Kalakacharya-Katha;* paper; *c.* 1500 A.D.; Gujarat; Western Indian Style (Gujarat and Rajasthan)
17 Folios from *Kalpa-Sutra* and *Kalakacharya-Katha;* paper; *c.* 1375-1400 A.D.; Gujarat; Western Indian Style (Gujarat and Rajasthan)
18 Folios from *Adi-Purana;* paper; executed in 1404 A.D. in Yoginipur (Delhi); Western Indian Style (Delhi-Gwalior)
19, 22 Marudevi and the sixteen lucky dreams; *Adi-Purana;* paper; executed in 1404 A.D. at Yoginipur (Delhi); Western Indian Style (Delhi-Gwalior)
20 Dancers and musicians; *Maha-Purana;* paper; *c.* 1420 A.D.; probably Delhi; Western Indian Style (Delhi-Gwalior)
21 The enemy retreating; *Pasanaha-Chariu;* paper; executed in 1441 A.D. at Gwalior; Western Indian Style (Delhi-Gwalior)
23 King and Queen; *Bhavishyadatta-Katha;* paper; *c.* 1420-1440 A.D.; probably Delhi; Western Indian Style (Delhi-Gwalior)
24 King with attendants; *Pasanaha-Chariu;* paper; executed in 1441 A.D. at Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh); Western Indian Style (Delhi-Gwalior)
25 Queen with attendants; *Pasanaha-Chariu;* paper; executed in 1441 A.D. at Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh); Western Indian Style (Delhi-Gwalior)
26 The hunter and his wife tend Yashodhara re-born as a peacock; *Jasahara-Chariu; c.* 1440-1460 A.D.; probably Gwalior; Western Indian Style (Delhi-Gwalior)
27 King conversing with Queen; *Santinaha-Chariu;* paper; *c.* 1440-1460 A.D.; probably Delhi-Gwalior region; Western Indian Style (Delhi-Gwalior)
28 Queen with attendants; *Jasahara-Chariu;* paper; *c.* 1454 A.D.; probably Gwalior; Western Indian Style (Delhi-Gwalior)
29 People conversing with Patriarch; *Adi-Purana* (Part I); paper; *c.* 1425-1450 A.D.; probably Delhi; Western Indian Style (Delhi-Gwalior)
30 Lady bathing; *Adi-Purana* (Part II); paper; *c.* 1450-1475 A.D.; probably Delhi-Gwalior region; *Chaurapanchashika* Style
31 King holding a lotus flower; *Adi-Purana* (Part II); paper; *c.* 1450-1475 A.D.; probably Delhi-Gwalior region; *Chaurapanchashika* Style
32 People seated in a pavilion; *Maha-Purana;* paper; executed *c.* 1540 A.D. at Palam (near Delhi); *Chaurapanchashika* Style
33, 37 Detail, *Jambudvipa;* cloth; *c.* 1550 A.D.; probably Delhi; *Chaurapanchashika* Style
34 King with attendants; *Adi-Purana* (Part I); paper; *c.* 1425-1450 A.D.; probably Delhi; Western Indian Style (Delhi-Gwalior)
35 Vidyadhar with Nami and Vinami; *Adi-Purana* (Part II); paper; *c.* 1450-1475 A.D.; probably Delhi-Gwalior region; *Chaurapanchashika* Style
36 Folio from *Adi-Purana* (Part II); paper; executed in 1441 A.D. at Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh); Western Indian Style (Delhi-Gwalior)

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Local Expressions: 1550-1750 A.D.

In A.D. 1526 Babur, a young Timurid prince from Central Asia, came to stake his claim over the territories conquered by his dreaded ancestor, Timur, more than a century before. He and his soldiers confronted the colossal army of the Delhi Sultanate at Panipat and despite Babur's unequal strength, he succeeded in defeating the Indian ruler. Babur ascended the throne of India and with him began the rule of the Mughal dynasty. For more than three centuries thereafter the Mughal emperors presided over the destinies and fortunes of India. In 1857 the representatives of the British Crown sent the Mughal Emperor into exile – and with his departure the rule of the famed Mughal dynasty came to an end.

The Mughals, heirs to the rich Timurid culture, were lavish patrons of the arts and sciences. Babur himself was a poet and recorded, in his memoirs, detailed observations of the land that he had now made his home – its people, its climate, its flora and fauna. He took great delight in rare and beautiful books but whether he ever had the opportunity to set up and maintain a workshop for book production is doubtful. His life had been much too unsettled for such indulgences. And, in India, Babur did not live long enough to initiate and enjoy cultural activities: all his time was spent in strengthening and consolidating his kingdom.

Babur's son and successor, Humayun, came to the throne in A.D. 1530. He was not as forceful as his father and, before long, insurgency drove him from his dominions. Forced to flee, Humayun sought asylum in Iran and it was there, at the court of Shah Tahmasp in Tabriz, that he was exposed to the fascinating tradition of Iranian book production. The superb masterpieces, written in elegant calligraphy and illustrated sumptuously, evoked Humayun's admiration and he must have longed to commission such books himself. Shah Tahmasp was becoming increasingly religious and orthodox in his views and gradually losing interest in the arts; he was, therefore, not averse to the proposition that some of his artists accompany Humayun back to India. The Persian artists appear to have started working for their new master soon after their arrival. And these essays represent the beginnings of Mughal Painting. In A.D. 1556, before Humayun could give any direction to this art-form, he was killed in an accidental fall and his young son, Akbar, was made king.

During Akbar's reign a full-fledged atelier of painting was set up at the Mughal court. Painters recruited from various parts of India worked under the two masters, Abdus Samad and Mir Sayyid Ali, who had come from Persia to India with Humayun. Under the inspiring guidance of Akbar a new style of painting – the Mughal Style – emerged. New ideas and ideals forged it into a highly naturalistic expression, alive with surging movement and glowing colours.

The Mughal Emperor's example was emulated by his vassals – Muslims and Hindus alike. This phenomenon gave rise to several new centres of painting outside the Mughal court, with each developing its own stylistic idiom. The paintings produced at these centres, during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, are tempered by trends prevalent in the Imperial atelier. The Mughal intervention is not always clearly visible but its nuances are discernible in the quality of line, the more naturalistic treatment of landscape as well as in the depiction of human figures. The paintings executed for Hindu chieftains are deeply rooted in the *Chaurapanchashika* Style of the preceding period. But gradually, as the dependence on the earlier tradition lessens, the bold stylisations disappear, giving way to a more mellow and harmonious expression. These paintings mark the beginnings of the various Rajasthani Schools.

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During A.D. 1550-1750 the Jains faithfully followed the time-honoured practice of commissioning copies of their religious texts. The activity was at its most prolific in the region of Gujarat and Rajasthan. The style of the Jain manuscripts, shackled by didactic considerations, tended to be very conservative. Even when it did absorb pictorial devices from prevailing local idioms, as in the state of Bundi, the expression was constrained and devoid of the lyricism that marked other products of the Bundi School. Consequently, Jain Painting in regions other than Gujarat, cannot be viewed as a fair indication of the stylistic achievements of the period or the region. Rather it exemplified a structured approach which exhibited an acquaintance with the pictorial devices of the regional idiom but tended to stabilise itself at a somewhat mediocre and drab level. This observation applies to Hindu manuscripts as well. The available evidence suggests that except at royal centres, the art of manuscript illustration, as a rule, did not aspire to great heights of aesthetic achievement but was content with mere illustration of the theme – sometimes with startlingly interesting results.

The School of Gujarat

In Gujarat, the Western Indian Style with its blue and gold colour-scheme extends listlessly into the sixteenth century. Towards the closing decades of the sixteenth century an expression emanating from the Western Indian Style is encountered in the *Laghu-Sangrahani-Sutra* painted at Matar in A.D. 1583. The developments and departures from the earlier style are most noticeable in the delineation of the human figures which have shed the farther eye and are now shown without the characteristic angular body distortions. The discrepancies are also visible in the palette which uses a wide range of colours including some unusual and novel hues such as lilac and dull green. Costly gold and silver are not employed. The simple compositions, spread over large areas, and the disposition and juxtaposition of colours indicate that this idiom, though a cognate of the Western Indian Style, is distinct from it. Certain stylistic devices, such as the red ground and the ornamental designs which serve to fill in vacant areas of the composition, linger on from the preceding period – though in a different form – and can be identified as stylistic components of the School of Gujarat.

Documents such as the *Laghushetrasamasa,* painted in A.D. 1583 in the new stylistic expression, testify that the Matar manuscript was not an isolated occurrence but a part of a new stylistic movement in Gujarat (Figs. 1-3). The gentle progression of this style in the seventeenth century is visible in the documents of the *Laghu-Sangrahani-Sutra* painted in A.D. 1604 (Figs. 10-13), the *Lokaprakasha* of A.D. 1657 (Fig. 4) and a Digambara Jain manuscript of the *Yashodhara-Charita* painted in Surat in A.D. 1687 (Fig. 5). The text of the *Laghu-Sangrahani-Sutra* was not illustrated in the preceding period. The manner in which this text is written as well as the translation of cosmological concepts into pictorial terms has produced some fascinating effects. Certainly, in terms of design this theme is more engrossing than most

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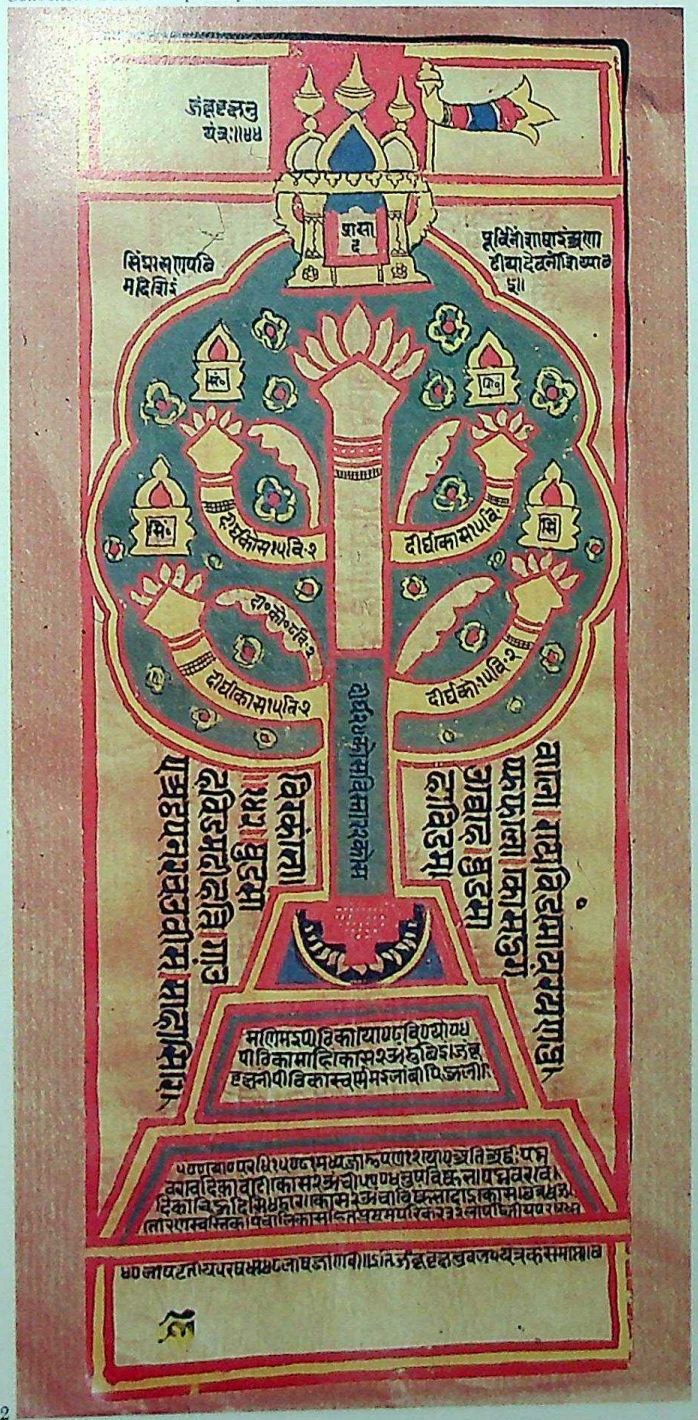

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others in Jain manuscript illustration.

Also within the stylistic framework of the School of Gujarat is another smaller group of manuscripts whose expression springs from the *Chaurapanchashika* Style. Their presence is puzzling inasmuch as none of the documents executed during the preceding period in the *Chaurapanchashika* Style proclaim a Gujarat provenance. However, these manuscripts from Gujarat, painted in the late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, in both folk and mannered versions of the *Chaurapanchashika* Style belie the belief that the

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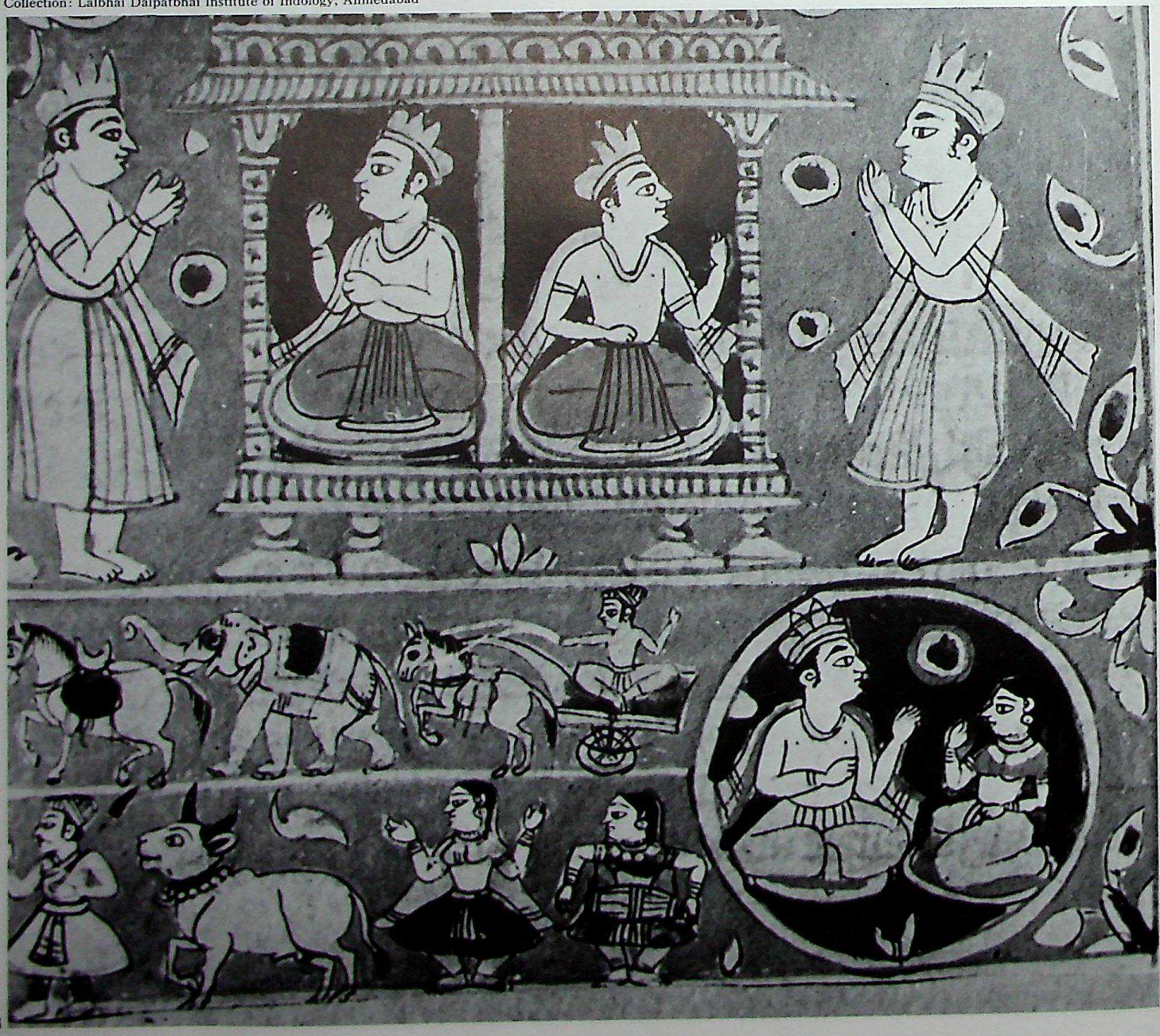

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Chaurapanchashika Style was not practised in Gujarat during the fifteenth century. Obviously, the *Chaurapanchashika* Style had a very wide geographical provenance. A manuscript of the *Yashodhara-Charita* painted in A.D. 1596 belongs to this group (Fig. 8; pp. 142-144, Figs. 19, 21). The colophon of the manuscript does not mention the place where it was executed. Nevertheless, the manuscript can be assigned to Gujarat on the basis of several stylistic devices such as the decorative treatment of tree foliage and pavilion domes. The floral motifs, strewn in the background of the miniatures, attest the special contribution of the Gujarat artists to these manuscripts.

An outstanding example of the idiom that evolved in seventeenth century Gujarat is a manuscript of the *Yashodhara-Charita* executed in A.D. 1636 at Idar (pp. 134-146, Figs. 1, 11, 17, 20, 22, 24). The style of this manuscript closely corresponds to that of the *Rasamanjari* series, attributed to Mewar *c.* A.D. 1615-1630, even though it is not as lively. In comparison to those in the *Rasamanjari* series, the compositions of this version of the *Yashodhara-Charita* are pedantic and the colours dreary. But the relationship between the two documents is immediately evident in the rendering of the human figures. The affiliations are further reinforced in certain specific motifs such as the red arbour of flowering creepers. The provenance of the *Rasamanjari* series has been assumed to be Mewar, and the slight deviation in style was attributed to the idiosyncrasies of the artist. However, on the basis of the evidence provided by the *Yashodhara-Charita* from Idar, the *Rasamanjari* can be convincingly ascribed to Gujarat. This attribution also explains the stylistic aberrations of the *Rasamanjari* series from the Mewar idiom. Actually, the kingdom of Idar, situated in north Gujarat, was contiguous to Mewar and both regions were held together by strong historical, geographical and cultural ties. In the seventeenth century, the interaction between Mewar and Idar was quite cordial, allowing for free movement of artists. Stylistically, the *Rasamanjari* series is more appealing than the *Yashodhara-Charita* manuscript because of its superior workmanship and the nature of its theme. The skilled and mature talent evident in the series indicates that it was commissioned by a more discerning patron—probably a member from the royal family of Idar.

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Towards the end of the seventeenth century Miniature Painting in Gujarat loses its integrated character. It fragments into various sub-styles which are held together by certain general characteristics, such as animated puppet-like figures, flower-strewn backgrounds, dull colours and monotonous compositions. These stylistic trends delineate a distinctive group which has little in common with other pictorial idioms.

Among the documents which exemplify the various sub-styles of the Gujarat School is a manuscript of the *Yashodhara-Charita* featuring Poet Raidhu's composition. It was painted at Ahmedabad in A.D. 1712 (pp. 136-139, Figs. 6, 10). Its colophon mentions that the donor desired to have it painted in five colours to atone for her sins. The formulae followed in compositions of this manuscript are identical to those employed in earlier manuscripts featuring Raidhu's text on the *Yashodhara-Charita.* Evidently, the artists of this manuscript were in possession of a prototype on which they based their paintings. They copied the compositional formulae from the prototype but were free to use their own style as well as to select the colours. This manuscript reveals the persistence of certain stylistic conventions for a span of over two hundred and fifty years.

Rather unusual in conception when compared to other contemporary documents of the Gujarat School, is a manuscript of the *Upadeshamala* dated A.D. 1708. The style, though stilted, is quite charming with its forest scenes and the manner in which it conceives and utilises landscape, particularly water. The stylistic affiliations of this manuscript point towards a provenance close to Sirohi in Gujarat.

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The Schools of Rajasthan

In the kingdom of Rajasthan, Jain painting followed a course similar to that of Gujarat. In Amer and its vicinity during A.D. 1590-1610, two idioms were at work: one rooted in the Western Indian Style of painting—the northern version of it—and the other a direct extension of the *Chaurapanchashika* Style. Both these styles are represented in the illustrated texts of the Digambara Jains.

Among Digambara Jain texts, is a manuscript of the *Yashodhara-Charita* painted in A.D. 1590 at Amer (pp. 138-139, Fig. 13). It shows the prolongation of the style found in the Naya Mandir *Maha-Purana* (p. 59, Fig. 20; pp. 94-96, Figs. 19, 23), but without the farther eye and the angular exaggerations and distortions. The execution is competent, but the style, with its simplified static compositions and archaisms, betrays a loss of vitality.

Another manuscript, a copy of the *Adi-Purana*, was written in A.D. 1606 at Mozamabad near Amer. The painting of the illustrations was not completed. This unfinished project consists of numerous illustrations in various stages of production. The few finished miniatures indicate that the origins of this folkish expression can be traced to the *Chaurapanchashika* Style. The remaining illustrations—in their varying stages of completion—are interesting because they reveal that the methodology adopted in illustrating this manuscript differs from the practice followed in the foregoing periods when the illustrator began working on the first miniature and completed it before proceeding to the next. Here, the master-artist first wrote captions on the folios which marked the position of the various elements of the composition (Fig. 6). Thereafter, the artist-draughtsman drew the figures. During the third stage the colours were applied to the composition (Fig. 7). And, last of all, the finishing touches, such as the final outline and the decorative designs on textiles and architectural features, were added. The few finished folios suggest that the work was entrusted to two master-artists working with a few apprentices (Fig. 9; p. 87, Fig. 2). Possibly, the project of painting this manuscript was undertaken by a family of painters.

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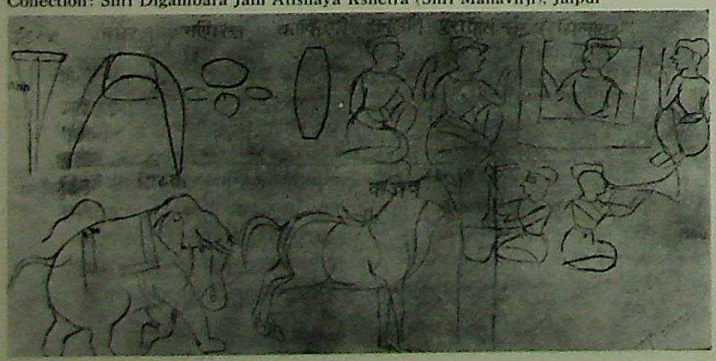

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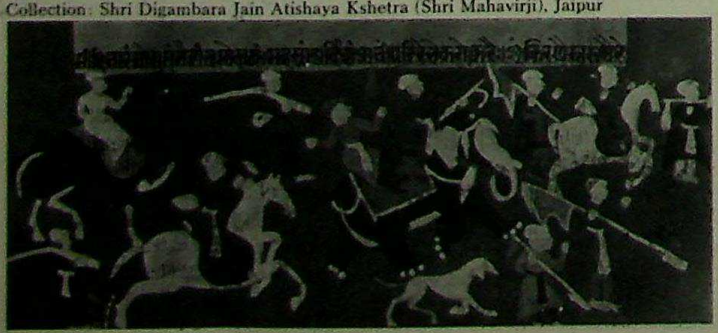

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This assembly-line method of working required a group or a family of artists instead of a single artist to execute commissions. This change in work-methods may have been caused by the atelier system established at the Mughal court. The new system may have extended from the Imperial atelier to artists who worked outside it in Delhi or Agra. Possibly, a painter family from the Mughal capital cities may have been invited to execute such a manuscript. In all likelihood, families of painters did not wait to be invited to execute commissions and probably found it profitable to move from place to place, offering their services and expertise in producing illustrated manuscripts for wealthy merchants and feudal chiefs.

That Jain patrons did indeed employ scribes and perhaps even painters from other centres to execute commissions is indicated by the Digambara Jain text of the *Yashodhara-Charita* dated A.D. 1636 (pp. 138-139, Fig. 9). Painted in a nondescript style at Jobner, this manuscript mentions in its colophon that the scribe hailed from the neighbouring town of Ajmer. Possibly, this remark includes the artist as well. Apparently, the pious donor sought the services of people specialising in the sphere of copying and illustrating manuscripts as such expertise may not have been available in the little town of Jobner. This would indicate that artists based at certain large centres travelled to nearby places in order to execute commissions. If so, such artists must have transported their style wherever they went. And, in that case, the place of execution would have little bearing on the style of painting employed.

Yet another manuscript, again on the Digambara Jain theme of the *Yashodhara-Charita*, exemplifies the different levels of accomplishment and workmanship that existed in the styles of painting practised at any one centre. This manuscript, executed at Bundi in A.D. 1731, is painted in a style which correlates with the contemporary idiom at Bundi

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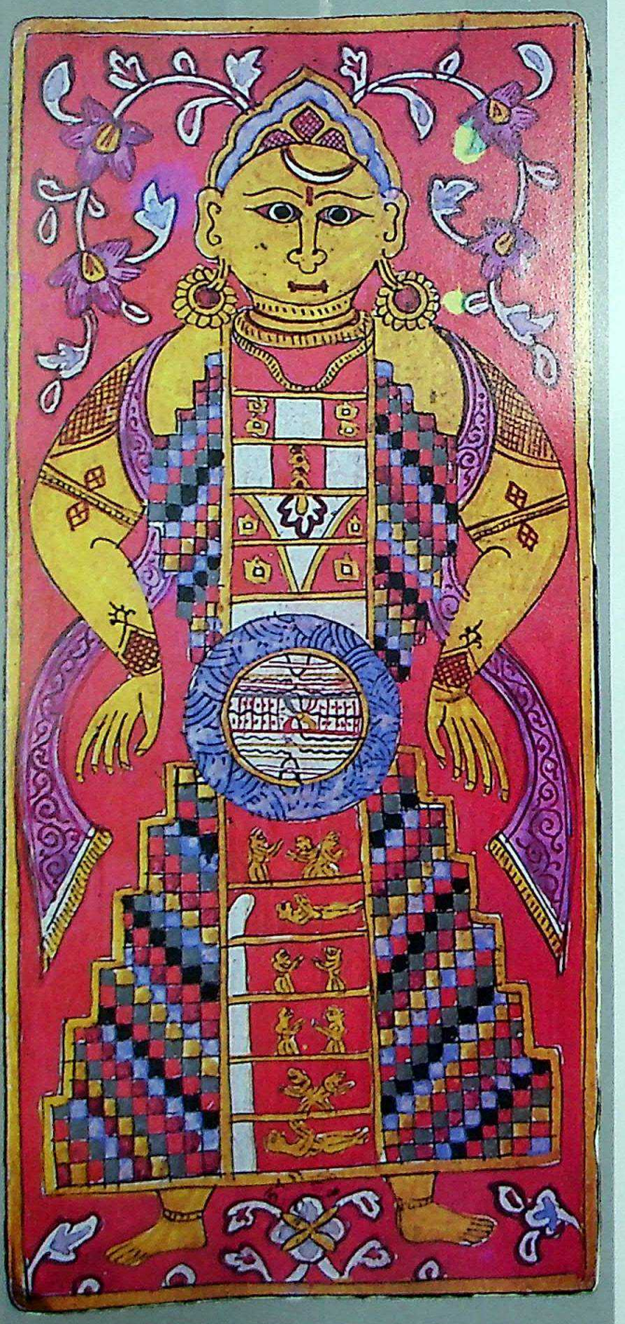

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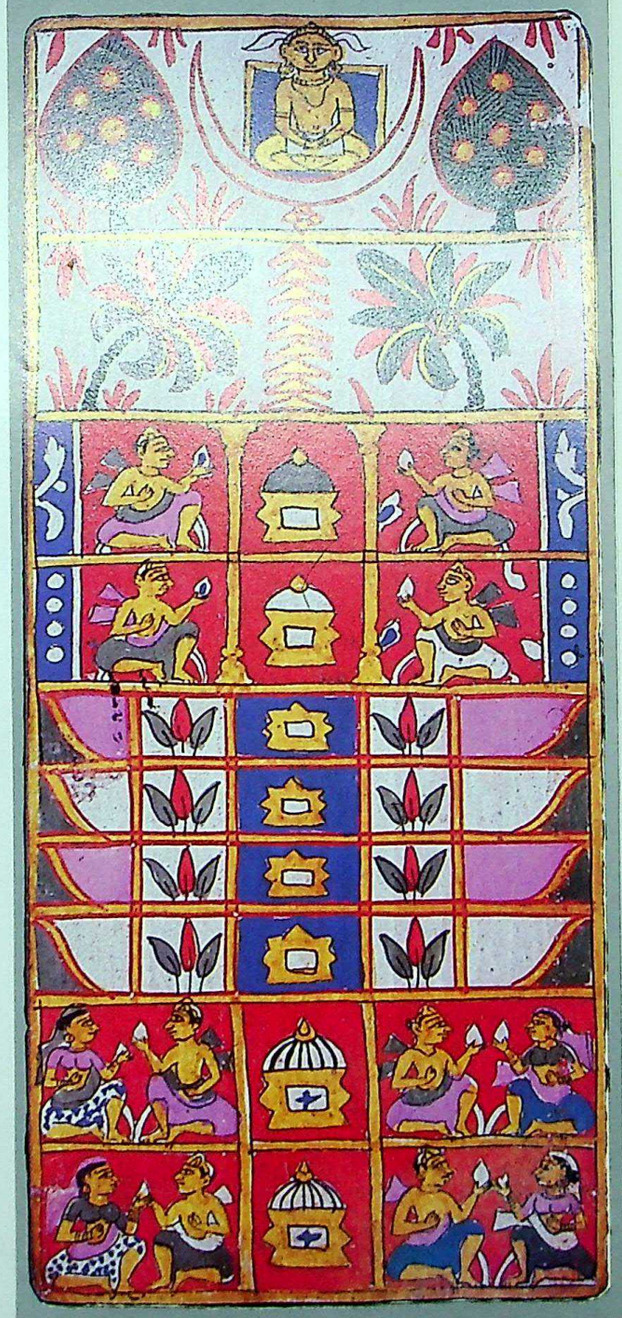

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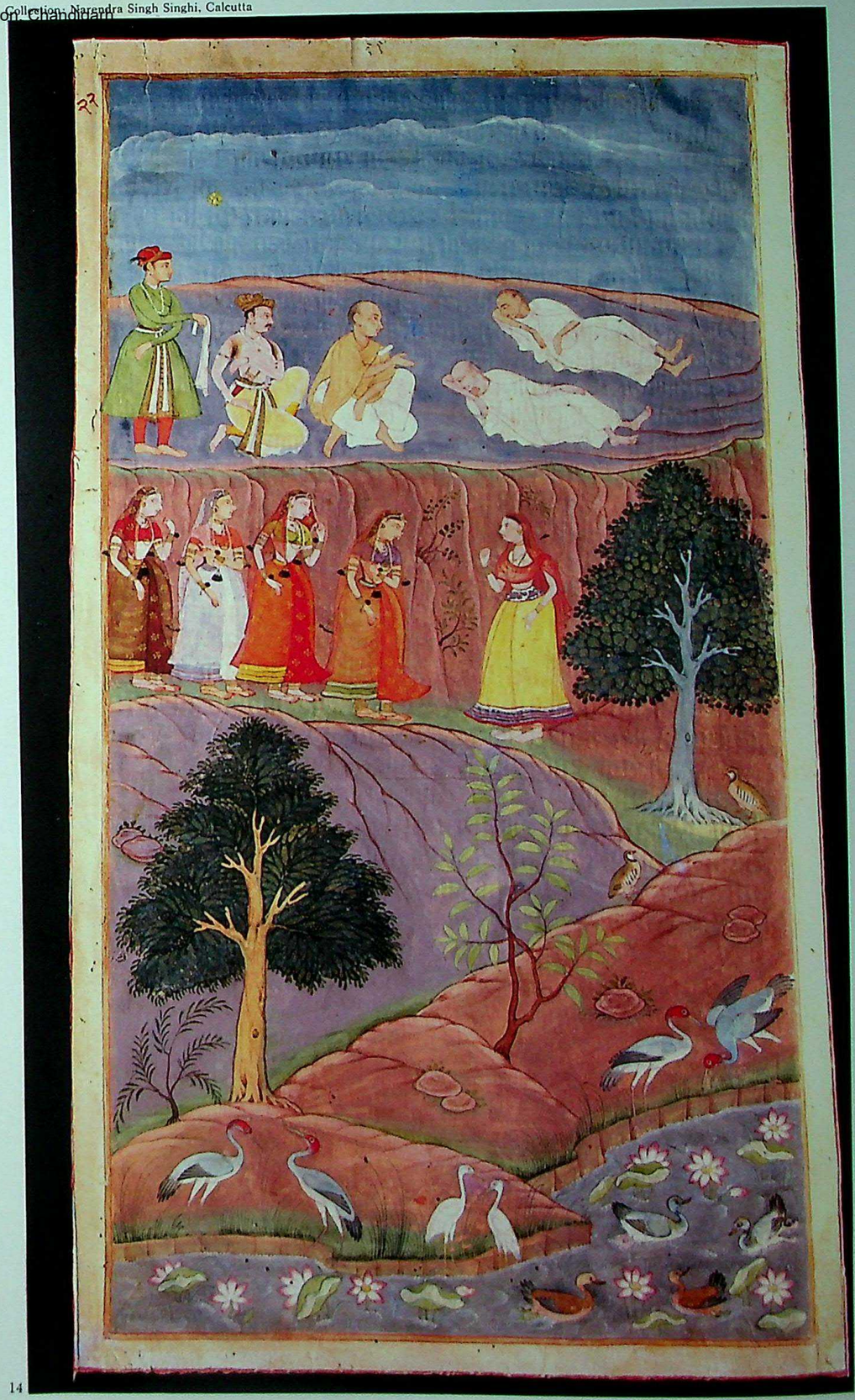

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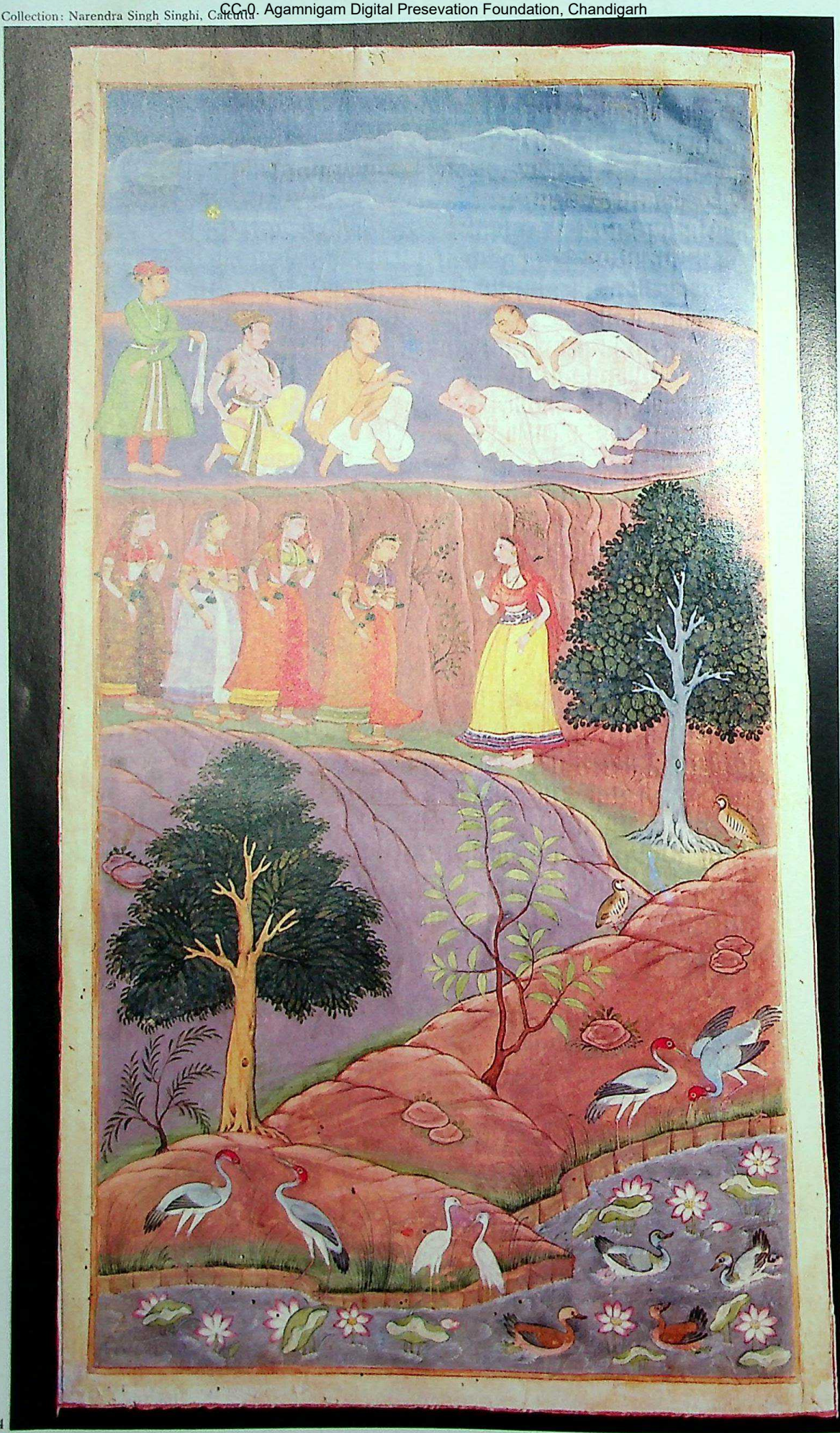

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(p. 138, Fig. 8). However, the miniatures of this Jain manuscript lack the high quality encountered in paintings made for the royalty and the nobility of Bundi. Certainly the style of this Jain manuscript emphasises the wide gap that can exist between two coeval products of the same school – especially if one belongs to the hieratic and the other to the non-hieratic tradition.

In the seventeenth century, the Jains began to commission illustrated copies of the *Bhaktamara Stotra* (Fig. 15). This theme had not been illustrated previously and the artist based its format on that employed in series such as the *Rasamanjari* or the *Rasikapriya* – with a verse on every folio. Curiously, only the Digambara Jains ordered paintings of this theme even though it occurs in the literary traditions of both the sects.

The Popular Mughal School

In the atelier of Emperor Akbar, the art of the book was practised on the most lavish and magnificent scale. Artists from various parts of India worked under the direction of Persian masters to illustrate stories, myths, histories and poetry. One of the early projects undertaken at the Imperial studio was the *Hamzanama* describing the adventures of Amir Hamza, the uncle of the Prophet Mohammad. Ambitiously conceived and executed, this document was painted on large sheets of cloth measuring approximately 60 x 55 cms. and consisted of fourteen volumes, each containing 100 paintings. The *Hamzanama* took more than fifteen years to complete. Thereafter, the artists were occupied with the illustration of historical works, biographies of Mughal kings, including that of Emperor Akbar, and Hindu themes. The intense activity at the studio required a large number of artists but some of those employed there were not able to measure up to the exacting standards maintained at Akbar's court. Such artists, though discharged from Imperial service, were capable of producing competent work. However, their stay in the Imperial studio, though brief, had familiarised them with the basic elements of the Mughal School. They were equipped with a style of painting that reflected an amalgam of Pre-Mughal and Mughal idioms. The accomplished among them succeeded in finding employment with the rich and powerful nobles of the realm and modulated their efforts to satisfy the needs of their Muslim or Hindu patron. Some artists chose to remain in the Mughal capital and were content to execute commissions for wealthy merchants and chieftains.

With the ascension of Jehangir to the Mughal throne, changes were carried out in the Imperial studio to suit his taste and requirements. Several artists were dismissed and their services became available to a wider section of patrons. As a result there developed, outside the Mughal studio, a style of painting which was more popular in its approach and represented a blend of Mughal and indigenous stylistic traits. This idiom, unlike the one catering to the cultivated taste of the nobility, was not heavily overlaid with Mughal influences. It was actually closer to Pre-Mughal works in spirit and therefore better suited to the less sophisticated demands of its new clientele. Paradoxically, what the Mughal court had considered a weakness in style – the lingering presence of Pre-Mughal elements – now became the strength of the Popular Mughal Style.

Although the paintings and manuscripts executed in the Popular Mughal Style are very uneven in quality they share certain distinctive stylistic traits: simple stratified compositions, a colour-scheme that includes paler tones, emphatic areas of colour, figures in profile and stylised landscape. They differ from Pre-Mughal painting in their draughtsmanship which is delicate as well as careful and in their treatment of the human figure which is now endowed with a feeling of weight and plasticity. The compositions are arranged in flat planes with little attempt at showing spatial depth.

Among such artists was Ustad Salivahana who claimed in writing the distinction of having worked for the Mughal Emperor. He executed two documents for the Shvetambara Jains of Agra, one in A.D. 1610 and the other in A.D. 1624. The first is a *Vijanaptipatra*, a letter of invitation sent to

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Vijayendra Suri in Gujarat to come and spend the rainy season at Agra. The second is an illustrated version of the *Shalibhadra-Mahamuni-Charitra* (Fig. 14). Ustad Salivahana was evidently more talented than other artists who painted documents in the Popular Mughal Style for the Jains as none of the other documents exhibit the same quality of workmanship.

The Schools of the Deccan

During the rule of the Tughluq kings, a Muslim officer serving in the Deccan rebelled against the Sultan of Delhi and founded a kingdom that lay south of the Vindhya mountain range and stretched across the Deccan plateau from coast to coast. This Bahamani kingdom suffered the same fate when its provincial governors rebelled against the central authority fragmenting it into five separate Sultanates—Bidar, Berar, Ahmednagar, Bijapur and Golconda. Three of these kingdoms, those of Ahmednagar, Bijapur and Golconda became politically powerful and assumed cultural importance.

These independent Sultanates maintained close contact with the Safavids of Iran—evidence of which is reflected in their respective styles of painting. The few existing documents from these Deccani centres project a lyrical and sensuous quality which presents a sharp contrast to the earnest and often documentary passages of Mughal Painting.

With the exception of a very early palm-leaf document illustrated in Karnataka *c.* A.D. 1112-1120, there is no evidence of Jain Painting being practised in the Deccan and the southern regions. If, indeed, a tradition of Miniature Painting had existed prior to this time, all traces of it have since disappeared. This conspicuous void comes to an end in the late seventeenth century with the discovery of a painted scroll on cloth in the repository of the Sena Gana Temple of Karanja (Vidharba, Maharashtra). The *pata,* more than 12 m. in length and about 80 cms. in width, is fully illustrated and portrays the *Panchakalyanaka* of Rishabha (Fig. 20). This magnificent document, with its imaginative rendering, is not painted in any of the styles employed at the courts of the Deccan Sultans but in an idiom which is predominantly Rajasthani in spirit. This style first appears in a *Rasamanjari* dated A.D. 1650 and copied in Aurangabad for a prince of one of the fiefdoms that owed allegiance to the Mewar court. Several factors contributed to the emergence of this pictorial expression, the foremost among them being the long and arduous Mughal campaigns in the Deccan. Many Rajput chieftains serving in the Mughal armies were stationed in the Deccan and, during their

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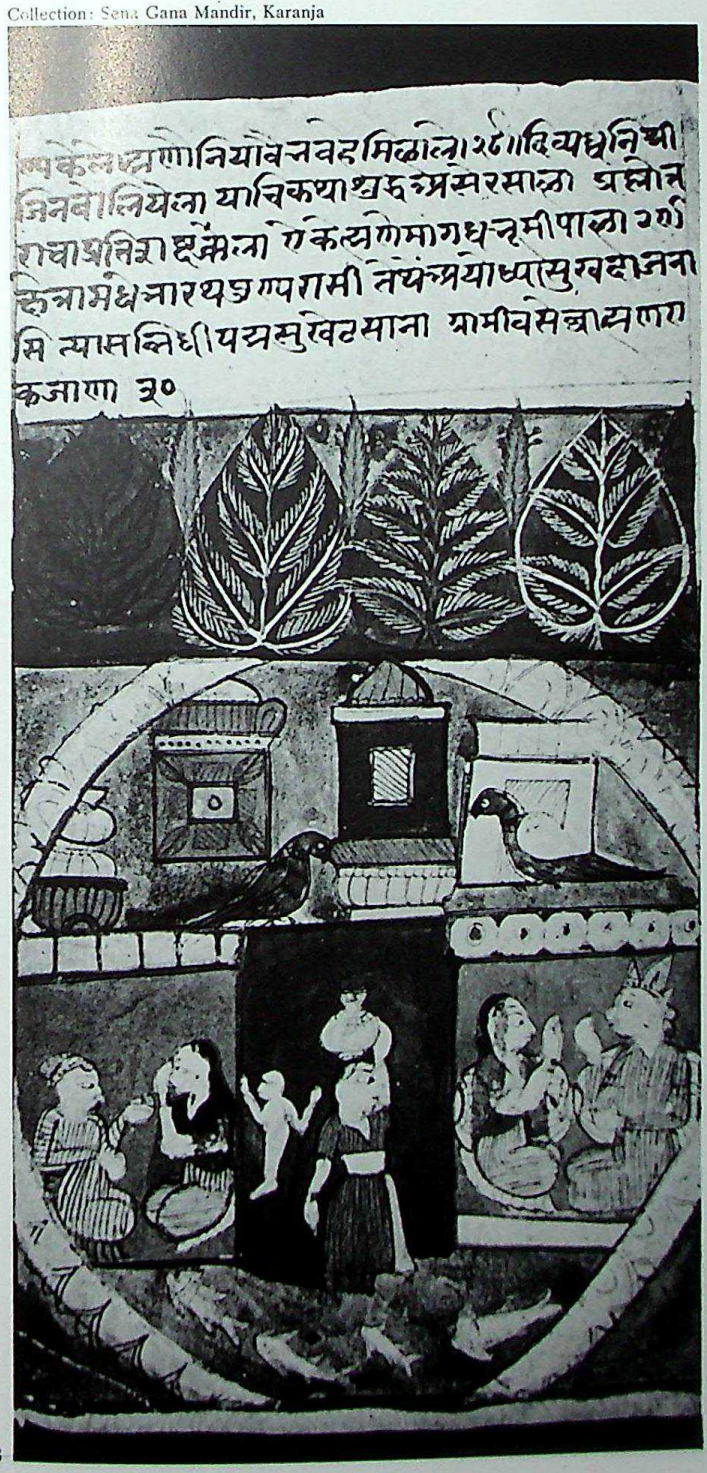
Collection: Sena Gana Mandir, Karanja



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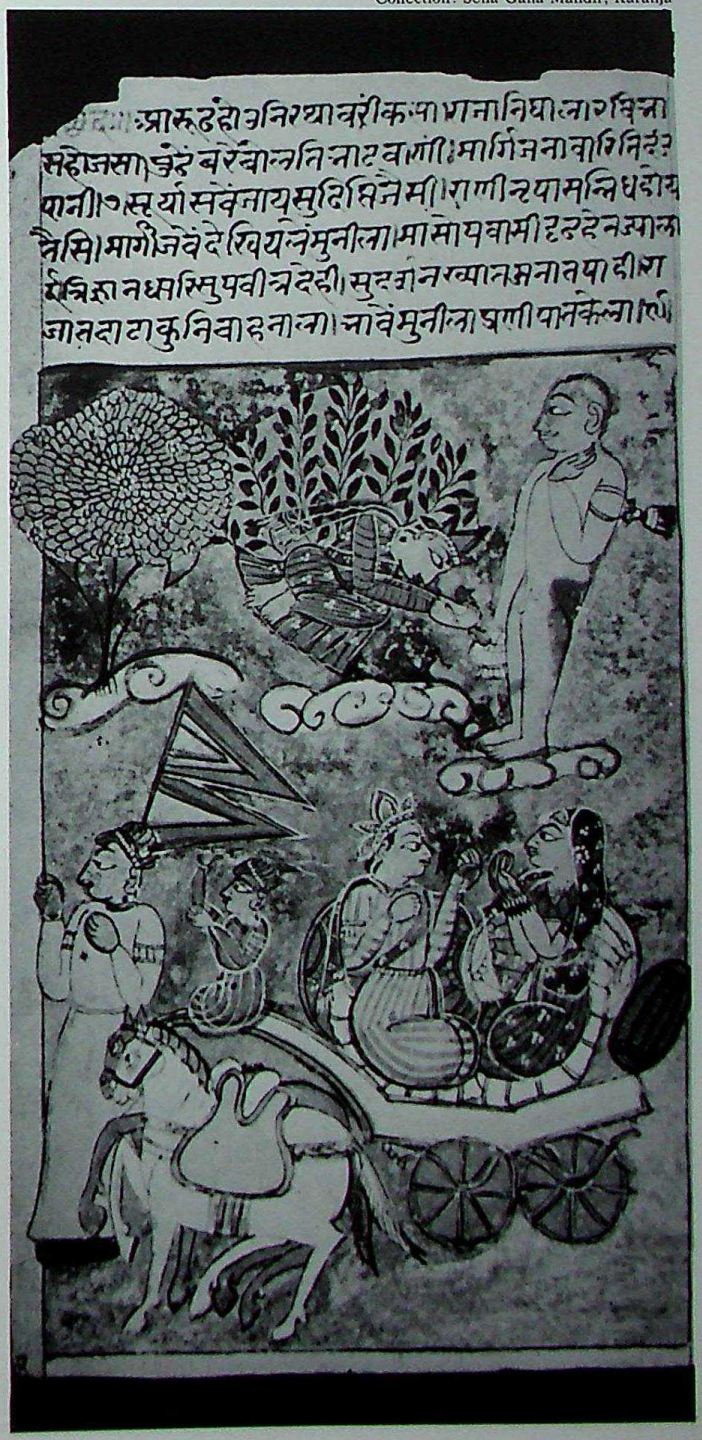
Collection: Sena Gana Mandir, Karanja



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extended sojourn, the commissioning of paintings probably provided a source of diversion in their regimented lives. Their aesthetic predilections gave rise to a new idiom of painting which had absorbed stylistic traits from all the major schools of Rajasthani Painting—Mewar, Bundi and Bikaner—and assimilated them along with devices from the Mughal and Deccani Schools. All these elements from separate sources were synthesised and fused together to form a distinctive idiom. The result was a stylistic expression that was predominantly Rajasthani in feeling, and yet possessed by an eclectic character that distinguished it from any known idiom in Rajasthan. Since this style was practised in centres such as Aurangabad in the Deccan, it is termed as the Rajasthani-Deccani School. Interestingly, such pictorial expressions were also patronised by merchants and traders whose families had migrated from Rajasthan to the Deccan. Therefore, products of the Rajasthani-Deccani School, like those of the Popular Mughal School, show great variation.

The Jain *Panchakalyanaka pata* is painted in a style which, unlike the Aurangabad *Rasamanjari* series of A.D. 1650, does not appear to draw its inspiration from the Mewar School of painting, but from the Schools of Bundi and Bikaner. Its assured line, the use of colour and the treatment of landscape—despite the hieratic constraints and symmetrical configurations—proclaim this to be the work of mature talent. The *pata* bears no inscription to indicate its date and place of production. Its bias towards the Bundi Style can be explained by the fact that the ancestors of the people who comprise the congregation of the Sena Gana Temple at Karanja came from the regions of Bundi and Kotah. It is not certain why these families were forced to leave their homeland—whether it was famine, pestilence, religious persecution, or better business opportunities. Undoubtedly, they found a Rajasthani-Deccani style to be more compatible with their requirements in religious matters than a purely Deccani *kalam*. They may even have invited artisfs from Aurangabad to execute a project which was as ambitious and as important as the *Panchakalyanaka pata*.

A group of documents in the collection of the various Digambara Jain libraries in the Deccan, painted *c.* A.D. 1725-1750, reflect two types of pictorial expression. One is a Rajasthani idiom—crude and folkish—which is related to the painting at Sirohi with its palette of dark browns and bright orange. The *Chandan-Maliyagiri-Katha*, executed in Karanja in A.D. 1733, is one such example (Figs. 16, 17). Its miniatures are painted in the Sirohi style and lend support to the belief that during the eighteenth century the Sirohi style was the preferred idiom for illustrating Jain manuscripts regardless of whether they were painted in Gujarat, Rajasthan or the northern Deccan. The other idiom appears to be a local regional style judging from the depiction of the customs and costumes connected with the Marathas. It is encountered in a small group of manuscripts stored in the Digambara Jain temples (Figs. 18, 19, 21, 22). Some of them illustrate works in Marathi and appear to favour the themes composed by Poet Jinasagar who lived in Karanja during the eighteenth century (Figs. 18, 19, 22). This style of painting is not related to any other known idiom and its limited extent geographically confirms its provincial status.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

1-3 Folios from *Laghukshetrasamasa;* paper; dated 1583 A.D.; School of Gujarat
4 Folio from *Lokaprakasha;* paper; dated 1657 A.D.; School of Gujarat
5 Abhayamati and Abhayaruchi; *Yashodhara-Charita;* executed in 1687 at Surat; School of Gujarat
6, 7, 9 Folios from *Adi-Purana;* paper; executed 1606 A.D. at Mozamabad (near Amer); School of Rajasthan
8 King Yashodhara with Queen; *Yashodhara-Charita;* paper; executed in 1596 A.D.; School of Gujarat
10-13 Folios from *Laghu-Sangrahani-Sutra;* paper; dated 1604; School of Gujarat.
14 Folio from *Shalibhadra-Charitra;* paper; dated 1624 A.D.; probably Agra; Popular Mughal School
15 Folio from *Bhaktamara Stotra;* paper; dated 1694; probably Bikaner; School of Rajasthan
16, 17 Folios from the *Chandan-Maliyagiri-Katha;* paper; executed in 1733 A.D. at Karanja (Vidharbha); Rajasthani-Deccani Style
18 Folio from *Anantavrata-Katha;* paper; *c.* 1725-1750 A.D.; Rajasthani-Deccani Style
19 Folio from *Sugandha-Dashami-Katha;* paper; *c.* 1725-1750 A.D.; Rajasthani-Deccani Style
20 Dancing Indra; *Panchakalyanaka Pata;* cloth; *c.* 1680 A.D.; probably Aurangabad; Rajasthani-Deccani Style
21 Folio from *Adityavar-Katha;* paper; *c.* 1725-1750 A.D.; Rajasthani-Deccani Style
22 Folio from *Jivandhara-Katha;* paper; *c.* 1725-1750 A.D.; Rajasthani-Deccani Style

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A serious and systematic assessment of the evidence furnished by Jain temple-libraries shows that the concerns that guided Jain Painting throughout its course of development did not stem from aesthetic considerations but from a desire to illustrate the theme. Sometimes, as in the *Panchakalyanaka pata* or the Devasano Pado *Kalpa-Sutra,* the results were extraordinary as well as appealing, but this was more due to accident than intent. As Dr. Coomaraswamy has so penetratingly observed, "Elegance or an elegant combination of lines is not deliberately sought and in this sense the drawing is more like script (such as that of the accompanying text) made to be clearly and easily read. There is no preoccupation with colour or texture for their own sake . . . text and pictures form a continuous relation to the same dogma in the same key."

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Jain literature possesses a distinctive quality of its own. Encompassing a vast body of collective works, the Jain canon illuminates the inner thoughts and ideals of an exceptional group of minds from a distant epoch. At the core of the ancient texts rest the first stirrings of metaphysical speculation. The sacred books are didactic in tone and the earliest among them strikes as a mosaic of 'truths', pieced together from heterogeneous elements. Although the foundations of Jain literature were established by learned monks and sages, the edifice, once erected, was enlarged and embellished by the various contributions of poets. The canon covers a broad spectrum of literary activity that spans over two thousand years.

Large segments of the canonical assemblage are devoted to the discussion of subjects such as Karmic Theory; the classification of living beings; the doctrine of soul and matter; the mythical and geographical accounts of the continents and the oceans. The sermons include graphic renditions of the Jain concept of torment in hell for the wicked as well as delightful descriptions of the celestial abodes of the gods for the pious. The ancient literature also incorporates scientific works which pertain to the proper division of time and the seasons, as well as the sciences of astronomy and cosmology. Yet other sections are concerned with rules for monks and laypeople, and contain warnings about 'heretical' religious orders. Frequently, the authors resort to polemical observations to justify a point. For example, a direct criticism of Brahmanical rituals reads as follows: "If it were true that perfection can be attained by ablutions with cold water, then fishes, tortoises and snakes would attain the highest perfection. And, if water really washed away the evil deed, then it must need wash away the good deeds also."

The teachings project the approach to spiritual purification through the strictest observance of self-abnegation, patience and humility. In this context the touching ballad of Nemi conveys the ideal of asceticism by juxtaposing the portrait of the ascetic life against that of a warrior or ruler. The understanding of Jain philosophy is intimately connected with the life of Mahavira, who is perhaps the most acclaimed preceptor of the community. Jainism demands rigid adherence to religious vows, even in the face of adversity and therefore holds Mahavira, the Great Hero, as the archetype of the Jain mendicant.

Of the various teachings, the one bearing the title "Holy Teachings and Explanations" is significant in its

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exposition of the Jain dogmas. This document, conceived in the dialogue form of question and answer, provides, more than any other work, glimpses of Mahavira as an historical figure. Through it, we gain a perspective on his personality, his life, his work, as well as his relationship with his disciples and contemporaries. It also serves as an important record for the history of linguistics and the development of literary style: it carries the authentic echoes of the founder's own manner of expression.

Side by side, the canonical and non-canonical traditions evolved. A large body of non-canonical literature comprising of epics, poetry, legends, stories and fables served to elaborate and elucidate the canonical texts. Often, the difference between the two genres becomes amorphous. The narrative mode is particularly suitable for effecting transitions back and forth and the *Adi-Purana,* a Digambara Jain text of epic proportions, employs this method constantly. The progression of the narrative is periodically interrupted by intervals during which Rishabha or another saint expounds on the Jain canon. This text is also notable for the little tales and fables that are inserted into the mainstream of the narration. They are not mere digressions, nor are they placed there for entertainment; they serve the more subtle purpose of teaching and reinforcing the Jain beliefs. The *Adi-Purana* is conceived and structured in the popular question and answer form which is so common in Indian literature. The exchanges involve occasional questions and lengthy elaborate responses.

Biographies of Tirthankaras and sages also abound. In this sphere the distinctions between fact and fiction become irrelevant and the line between the two is conspicuously absent. In the legends of historical figures such as Mahavira and Parshva, history and myth intertwine. In the *Kalpa-Sutra,* a canonical text of the Shvetambara Jains, there is a section that narrates the stories connected with the last three Tirthankaras—Mahavira, Parshva and Nemi—and the first Tirthankara, Rishabha. The accounts are encrusted with formal stereotyped formulae which tend to become monotonous, so much so that in the later stories, only a catchword is given by way of reference to passages in the previous narration. This cliché technique occurs fairly frequently in works intended for recitation.

Among the *kathanakas* (little tales) there is the charming story known as the *Kalakacharya-Katha,* which forms part of the literature of the Shvetambara Jains. The legend, apparently with an historical core, resembles a Prakrit poem in its mixture of prose and verse. Here again, fact and fable are interwoven in the same textual fabric.

The theme of the *Yashodhara-Charita* is a perennial favourite with the Digambara Jains. It is a fable that deals with one of the five basic injunctions: restraint from killing. The literary form adopted for this work is to follow the fate of one person as he goes through various re-incarnations—from that of a human, to an animal, to a bird, and back to a human. The underlying intention of this piece is to stress the suffering brought upon oneself by sin.

It is evident from these legends and fables that the Jains, like their co-religionists, enjoyed garnishing their teachings with story-telling, propagating their doctrinal values by means of parables, and combining the natural with the supernatural. It is obviously a literature directed toward the masses which effectively exploits the Indian taste for the miraculous. The work also contains many contemporaneous themes and popular tales that the authors borrowed from prevailing literary traditions and adjusted to fit their own context. The *puranas* and the *charitas* often served as an outline within which all sorts of tales of adventure and fables were introduced. The mythological framework functions as a supplement to the canon and becomes an effective agent in religious instruction and edification. It provides fascinating insight into the essence of Jainism.

Folio showing Tirthankara; palm-leaf; c. 1375 A.D.; Gujarat-Rajasthan; Western Indian Style;
Collection, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland (Ohio)

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Adi-Purana

The Digambara Jains classify the sacred writings of their sect into four sections: the *Prathamanuyoga*, lives of Tirthankaras and other great men; the *Karananuyoga*, description of the geography of the universe; the *Charananuyoga*, rules of conduct for monks and laymen; and the *Dravyanuyoga*, philosophy.

Among the works that fall in the first or *Prathamanuyoga* category are the *puranas* which consist of myths and legends from ancient times. The word *purana* pertains to an old tale narrating the life of a single individual. The term *Maha-Purana* – literally translated as "the great legend" – is peculiar to the literature of the Digambara Jain sect and refers specifically to the text which describes the lives of the sixty-three prominent men of the Jain faith. These sixty-three persons are distributed among five groups: the 24 Tirthankaras; the 12 Chakravartins; the 9 Vasudevas; the 9 Baladevas; and the 9 Prativasudevas.

The *Maha-Purana* is composed of two parts: the *Adi-Purana* and the *Uttara-Purana*. The first section describes the cosmic cycle; the life of the first Tirthankara, Rishabha, his ten former births; and the life of Bharata, the first Chakravartin and son of Rishabha. The segment describing the former births of Rishabha contains numerous tales and episodes which have a very tenuous relationship with the main story. The part narrating the lives of the remaining great men forms the *Uttara-Purana*. The *Maha-Purana* contains not only detailed and embellished biographical accounts of the Jain saints and heroic figures, but it also presents a comprehensive picture of the Jain historical and spiritual perspectives. In this sense, the overall significance of the work reaches far beyond that of the heroic epic poem. The section known as the *Adi-Purana,* for example, includes the various rites and consecrations, in their proper order, which an individual must undergo before attaining omniscience and enlightenment. A more practical aspect of the narrative concerns the detailed descriptions of the attempt to develop a form of government. This was apparently initiated because of the deteriorating circumstances that plagued the earth which caused increasing discordance among the people. The text also defines the procedure involved in the institution of a legal system, as well as the elements inherent in town planning. All of these additional features, interspersed within the complicated story-line, contribute toward historical and philosophical insights into the Jain psyche.

Akin to many Hindu *puranas,* the Jain *Maha-Purana* deals with the Genesis of the world, the epochs between the Manus and the legendary dynasties. And, interestingly, it is replete with Brahmanical terms as well as with rites associated with Brahmanism. This is no accidental occurrence; it is employed to convey, in a subtle manner, that Brahmanism and Hinduism are merely degenerate forms of the true faith – Jainism – which has existed from time immemorial.

One of the early texts on the theme of the sixty-three great men is that composed in Sanskrit by Jinasena during the ninth century A.D., in Karnataka. The author called the work *Trishashtilakshana-Maha-Purana-Samgraha.* He was, however, able to complete only a part of it before his death; his disciple, Gunabhadra, finished the remaining sections. Another poet, Pushpadanta, composed the *Maha-Purana* in Prakrit towards the end of the tenth century, in Manyakheta, the capital of the Rashtrakuta empire.

Texts describing the lives of the sixty-three great men occur in the sacred literature of the Shvetambara sect as well. The most famous among these is the *Trishashti-Shalaka-Purusha-Charita* composed *c.* 1170-1172 A.D. in Sanskrit by Poet Hemachandra.

The *Maha-Purana* traces its origin to Mahavira who, according to Jain beliefs, communicated it to his chief

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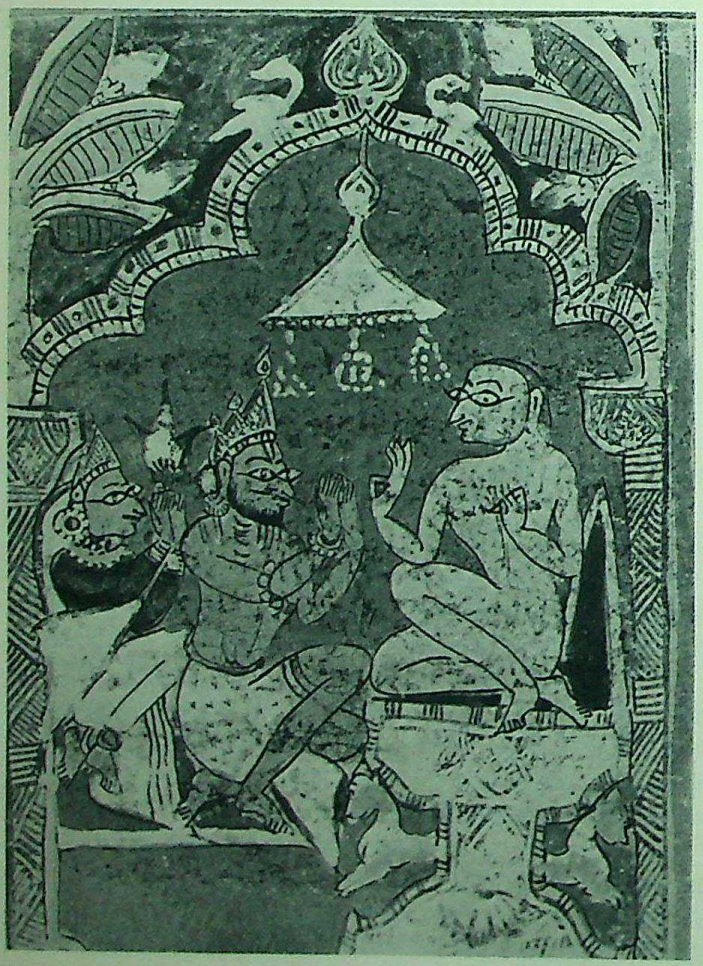
disciple, Gautama Ganadhara. The initial verses of the *Maha-Purana* tell of the King Shrenika, who approaches Gautama Ganadhara and entreats him to recite the story of the *Maha-Purana.* Gautama obliges the King with the account. The narrative unfolds in answer to each of Shrenika's questions. || Fig. 1 ||



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The Text

The two compositions of the *Adi-Purana* reflect that each author tends to vary in his treatment of the narrative and in his arrangement of its sections. This poetic license, however, does not interfere with the story-line; the theme remains the same in both versions.

The Jains believe that their religion is timeless and that it has been revealed to humanity by countless Tirthankaras in an infinite series of cosmic cycles, having neither a beginning nor an end.

Jain texts conceive of the cosmic cycle as a wheel; its twelve spokes divide it into twelve segments—each representing a different phase of the cosmic cycle. These phases are:

1 : *sushama-sushama* (utmost happiness)
2 : *sushama* (happiness)
3 : *sushama-dushama* (happiness with some unhappiness)
4 : *dushama-sushama* (unhappiness with some happiness)
5 : *dushama* (unhappiness)
6 : *dushama-dushama* (utmost unhappiness)
7 : *dushama-dushama* (utmost unhappiness)
8 : *dushama* (unhappiness)
9 : *dushama-sushama* (unhappiness with some happiness)
10 : *sushama-dushama* (happiness with some unhappiness)
11 : *sushama* (happiness)
12 : *sushama-sushama* (utmost happiness).

The movement of the cosmic cycle through time is comparable to the single rotation of the wheel. The downward movement of the cycle represents the *avasarpini* era during which time the world succumbs to the influence of the bad serpent; the physical environment as well as the spiritual conditions on earth begin to deteriorate. During this course, suffering steadily increases until it eclipses happiness. The dissipation of piety and knowledge reflects the degenerative quality of the phase. In this era the life-span, physical stature and energy of human beings become diminutive. When the wheel takes an upward turn, it enters the sphere of influence of the good serpent. A new era—that of *utsarpini*—dawns. Truth and piety are on the ascendency. From chaos and despair, the environmental conditions of life on earth progress to utmost bliss in six stages—each stage happier than the last. Together these two eras—*avasarpini* and *utsarpini*—form one cosmic cycle.

Jain literary conventions compare the cosmic cycle to the lunar cycle. The *avasarpini* and *utsarpini* eras are analogous to the *krishnapaksha* and the *shuklapaksha* of the moon. Just as the brightness of the moon wanes in the *krishnapaksha* phase and waxes in the *shuklapaksha* phase, so the state of happiness in the world decreases in the *avasarpini* era and increases in the *utsarpini* era. Again, just as the *krishnapaksha* and *shuklapaksha* of the moon eternally succeed each other, so do the *avasarpini* and *utsarpini* eras of the cosmic cycle.

In every cosmic cycle 48 Tirthankaras are born to lead humanity to salvation: 24 in the *avasarpini* era and 24 in the *utsarpini* era. In both eras one Tirthankara is born in the *sushama-dushama* phase and the remaining 23 are born in the *dushama-sushama* phase.

According to Jain myths, in the present cosmic cycle which is passing through its *avasarpini* era, Rishabha was destined to be the first Tirthankara.

The first phase of the current cosmic cycle was a period of

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great happiness; people were beautiful in both mind and body, free of all blemishes. Their existence knew neither strife nor want because the ten *kalpavrikshas* abundantly satisfied all their needs and desires. During this period husband and wife exhibited great devotion towards each other and spent all their time together. Both were destined to die simultaneously and, at the very moment of death, to give birth to twins—a boy and a girl. These twins, in turn, lived as husband and wife until it was time for them to die and give birth to another set of twins.

The second cosmic phase, that of *sushama*, was also one of happiness, although not of utter bliss. In the third phase, happiness became tinged with unhappiness and, as the phase drew to an end, the power of the *kalpavrikshas* diminished.

The Age of Fourteen *Kulakaras*

At suitable intervals in the *avasarpini* era, fourteen *kulakaras*, patriarchs, were born. They played a specific and significant role in assisting people to cope with the declining conditions in the world. They also explained the many changes that would follow as the cosmic cycle progressed on its downward course.

The first startling occurrence was the appearance of the sun and the moon in the firmament. Until that time, the brilliance of the *jyotiranga kalpavriksha* had obscured the radiance of all heavenly bodies. But now, as the intensity of the former dimmed, the latter shone forth. The appearance of the sun and the moon aroused fear and suspicion in the minds of the people. It became the task of the first patriarch to calm their apprehensions by describing how these celestial bodies had become visible.

As the light from the *jyotiranga kalpavriksha* faded further, twinkling stars manifested themselves in the skies. While describing the nature of this phenomenon, the second patriarch discussed the different stars, the constellations, the movements of the planets, and the forces which caused solar and lunar eclipses. He also prepared the men and women for forthcoming changes such as the rising and setting of the sun which would lead to a separation between day and night on earth.

In the time of the third patriarch, people were astounded to see animals such as lions and tigers, which had hitherto served as pets, turn into fierce attacking beasts. The third patriarch told the people not to expect the animals to be docile anymore. He warned them to avoid all animals that possessed sharp fangs, claws or long horns—barring domesticated cows and buffaloes. For the protection of the masses, the fourth patriarch instructed them in the use of weapons and other methods of self-defense.

As the *avasarpini* era advanced, the power of the *kalpavrikshas* registered still further decline until even necessities became scarce and this caused serious dissensions amidst the people. The fifth patriarch therefore assigned certain *kalpavrikshas* to specified territories and encouraged everyone to share whatever was available. But some individuals made sly incursions into the areas of others which resulted in bitter and violent quarrels. The sixth patriarch was thus compelled to demarcate territorial boundaries with hedges. From the seventh patriarch, people learnt how to harness and ride elephants and horses.

Because they died the instant their children were born in the *sushama-sushama* phase, parents had had no occasion to see their offspring. But during the rule of the eighth patriarch, parents began to catch fleeting glimpses of their progeny. Thereafter, the advent of every new patriarch coincided with a lengthening of time spent between parents and children. At first it was only a few minutes, then a few hours, then a few days and finally, the term of family interaction stretched into many years.

At the time of the twelfth patriarch, hills and streams began to form on earth and so he taught the people how to make boats and how to cut steps in the hillside. || Fig. 2 ||

During the time of the thirteenth patriarch children were born in a sac and he showed parents the manner in which to free the children from the membrane. Thereafter, children were born as they are today and the fourteenth patriarch guided the people in the correct method of severing the umbilical cord at the time of birth. Thus he came to be known as *kulakara* Nabhi, or Nabhiraj. Nabhi and his wife Marudevi were destined to be the parents of the first Tirthankara, Rishabha. || Fig. 4 ||

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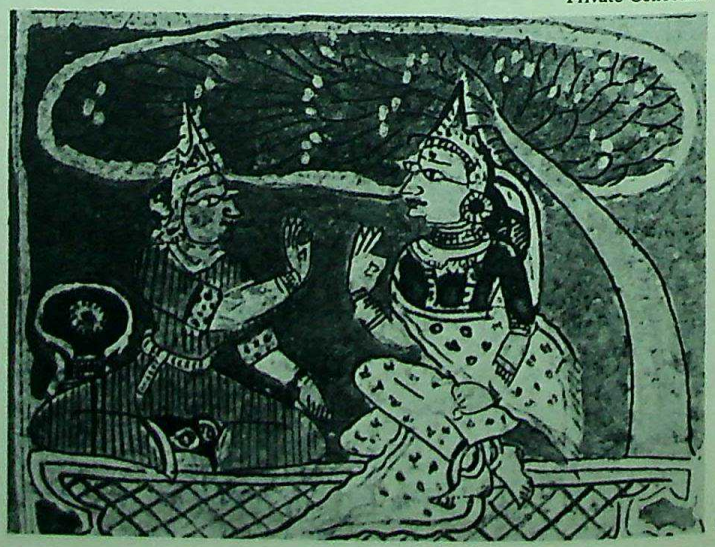

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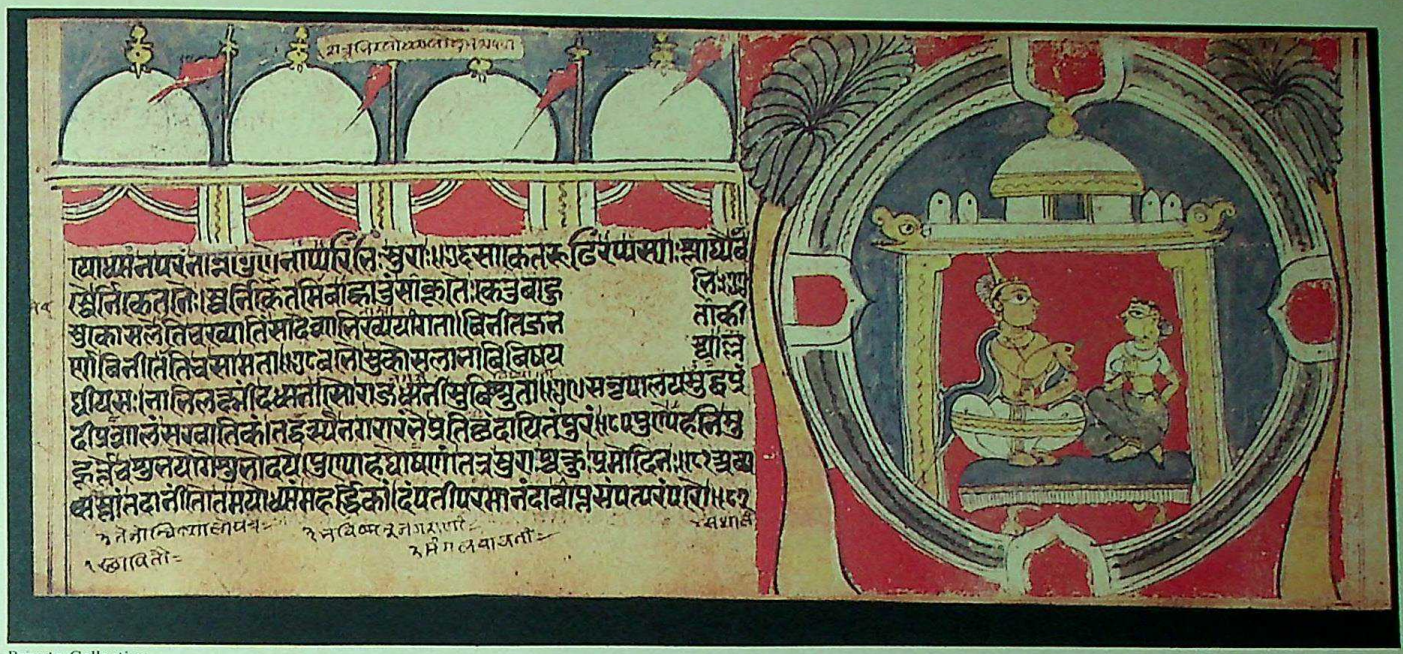

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By this time the powers of the *kalpavrikshas* had completely extinguished and soon the *kalpavrikshas* had vanished altogether. In their place sprouted stalks of grain and trees laden with fruit. These were fertilised by the rains of the first thunderstorm on earth. || Fig. 3 ||

Nabhi informed the people that their hunger could be appeased with fruit and grain. He showed them which of these were fit for consumption, which should be avoided because of their poisonous properties and which possessed medicinal qualities. When it became difficult for people to digest certain types of raw food, Nabhiraj showed them how to mould earthenware bowls on the side of an elephant's head for the purpose of cooking.

The *kulakaras* were also Manus and so they devised laws for maintaining peace and order. Over the years, forms of punishment evolved from disapproval, to warning, to reproach. As offences became more and more severe, the punitive measures became correspondingly harsher.

Life of Rishabha

During the days of Nabhi the gods descended on earth and constructed a city based on those in the heavens. In the centre of the city the gods erected a palace and around it they constructed mansions and lofty buildings. They also provided the town with many places of public interest and recreation. Around the city the gods built two fortifications: one made of mud, the other made of stone. Encircling the walls was a moat. The city was named Ayodhya and it served as a model for subsequent urban development. || Fig. 5 ||

Nabhi resided in the palace with his beauteous consort, Marudevi. Six months prior to the conception of the first Tirthankara, Rishabha, the god Dhanya showered the earth, which had been impoverished by the disappearance of the *kalpavrikshas,* with gold and gems to make it worthy of the coming of the Tirthankara. The cosmic cycle had already completed its first two phases and was well into the third phase — *sushama-dushama* — at this time.

Conception:

One night as Marudevi lay asleep on her couch, there came to her sixteen auspicious dreams. In the dreams she saw: (1) an elephant with ichor streaming from its temples; (2) a splendid bull, white as the white lotus; (3) a lion, that glowed like the luminous moon; (4) the lustration of goddess Lakshmi; (5) a pair of fragrant flower-garlands, surrounded by bees; (6) the full moon encircled by stars; (7) the piercing rays of the rising sun; (8) two golden vases, covered with water-lilies like Marudevi's own breasts covered by her hands; (9) two fish shaped like Marudevi's eyes; (10) a lake, yellowed by lotus pollen; (11) the ocean splashing angrily against the restraining shore; (12) a high throne of sparkling gems; (13) a heavenly carriage studded with pearls and precious stones; (14) a mansion from the netherworld; (15) a heap of jewels illuminating the very firmament; (16) a bright smokeless fire. At the end of these dreams, Marudevi saw a beautiful golden bull entering her mouth. || Fig. 7 ||

Marudevi awoke and the hair on her body stood erect in

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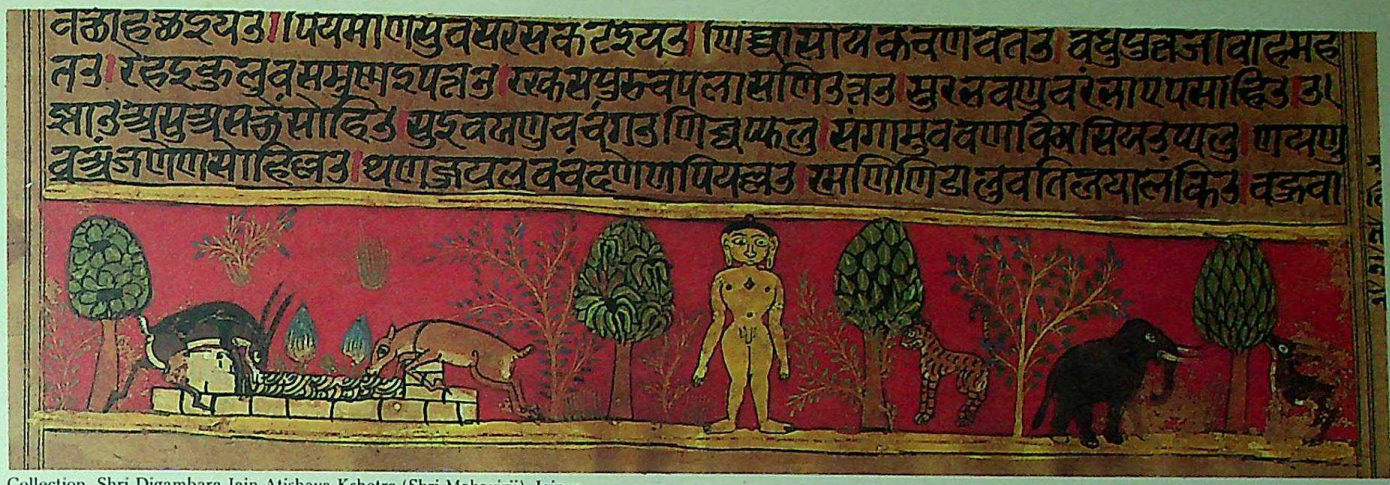

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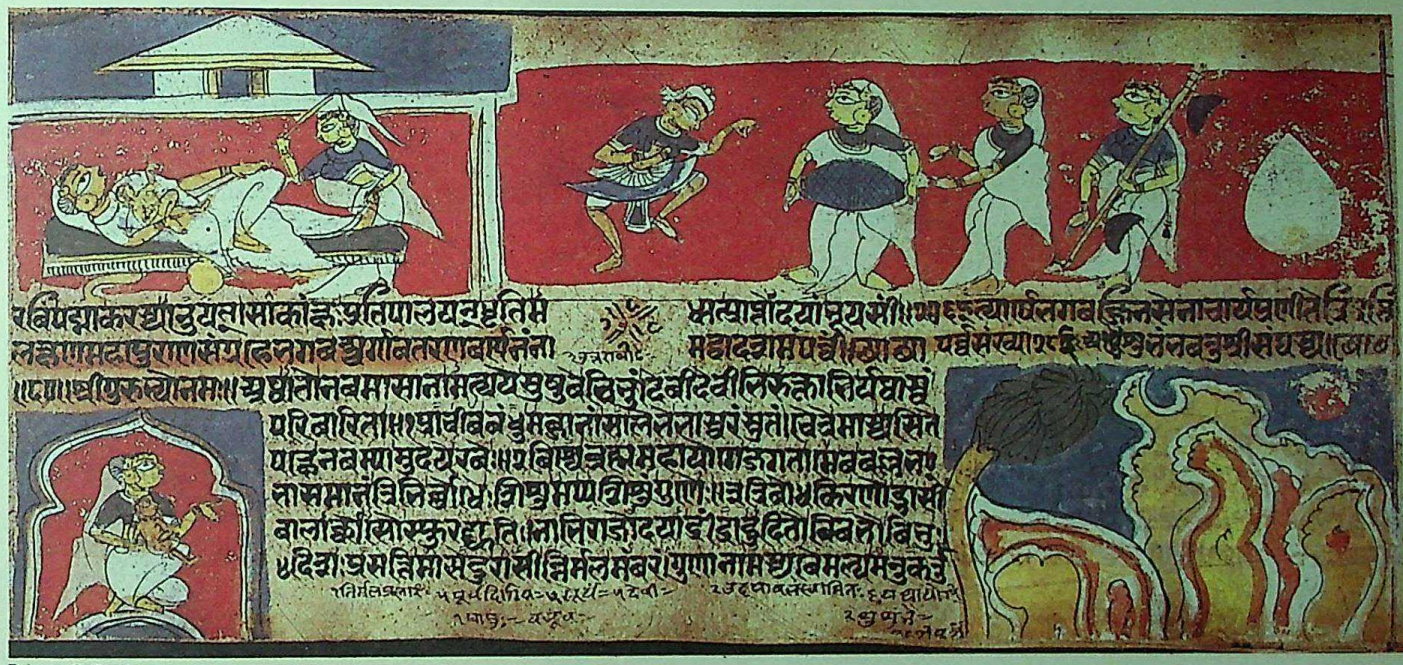

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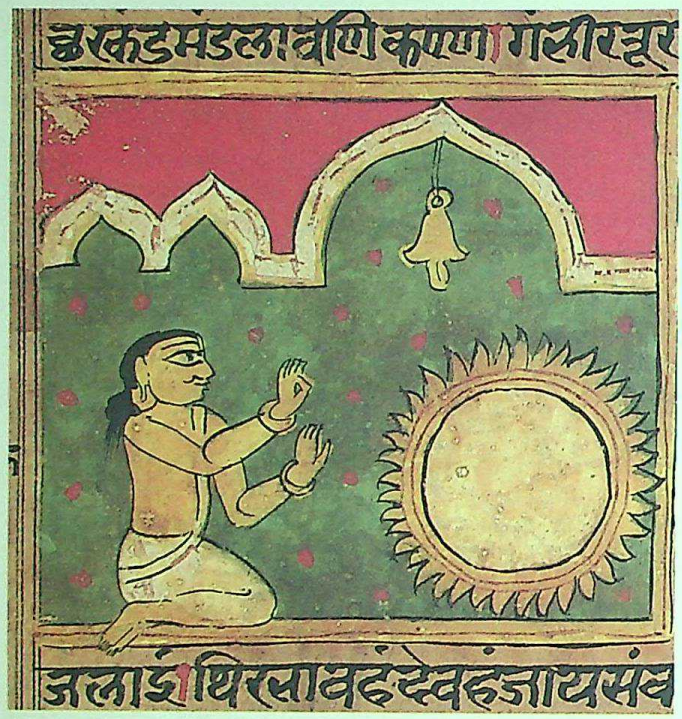

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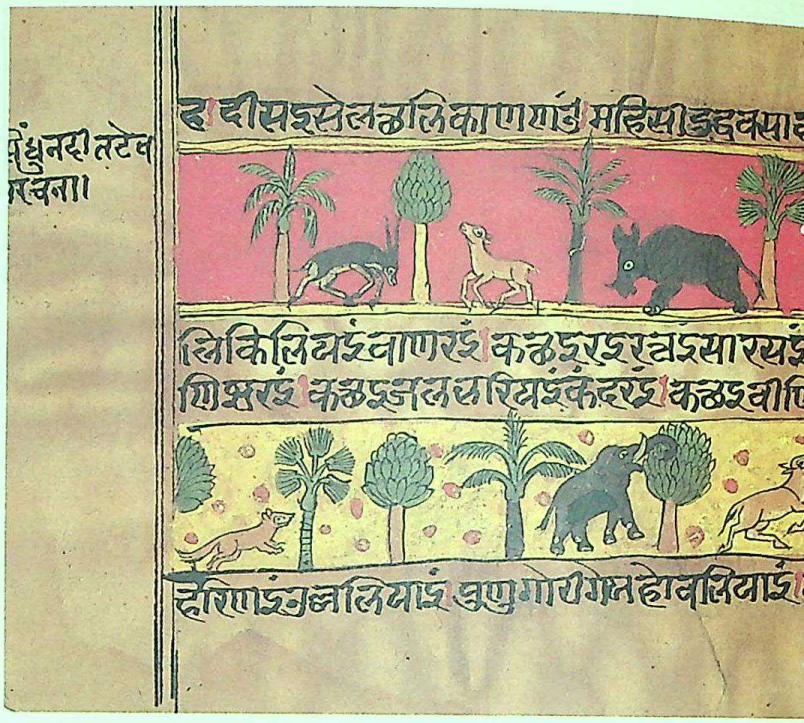

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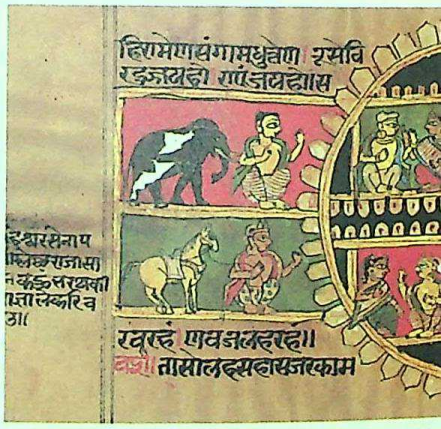

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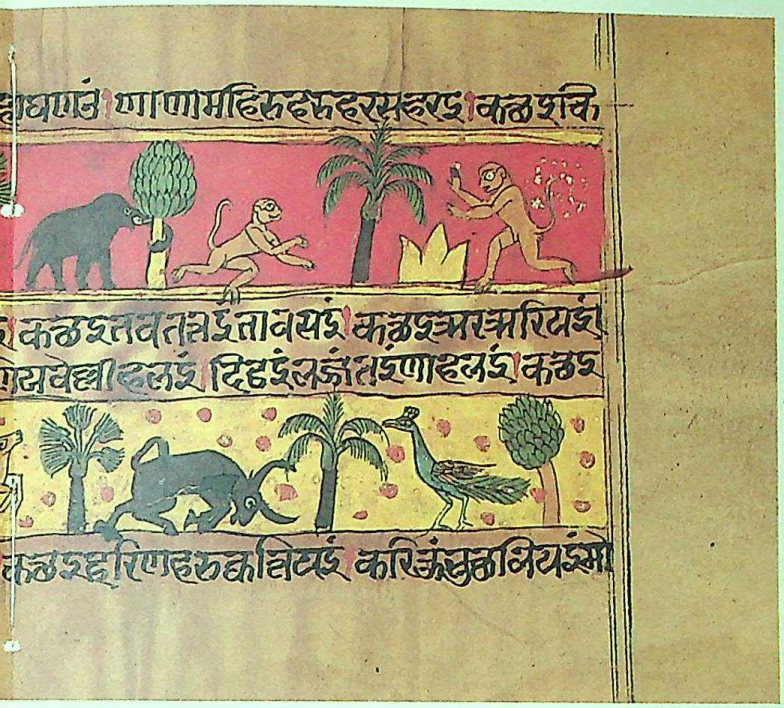

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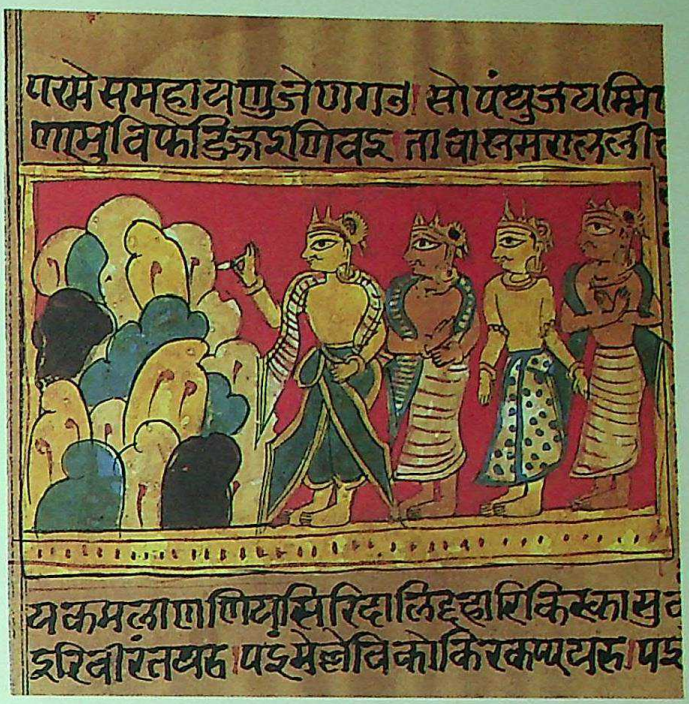

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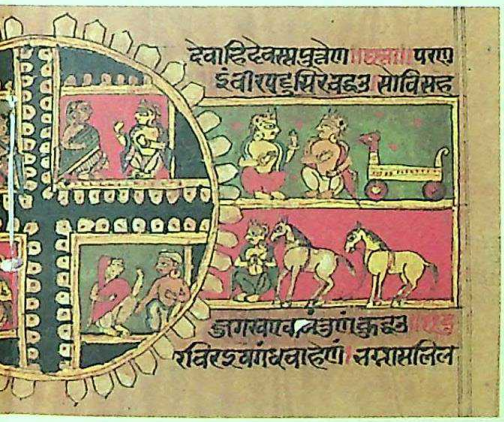

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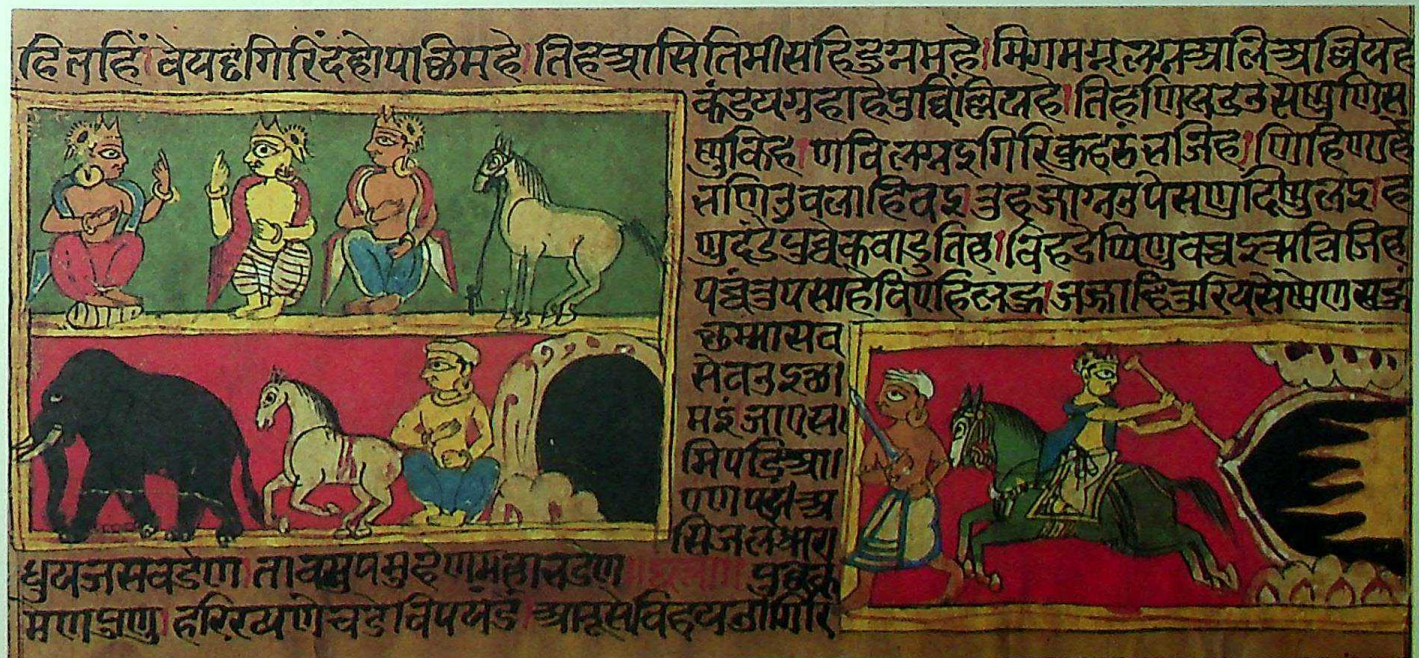

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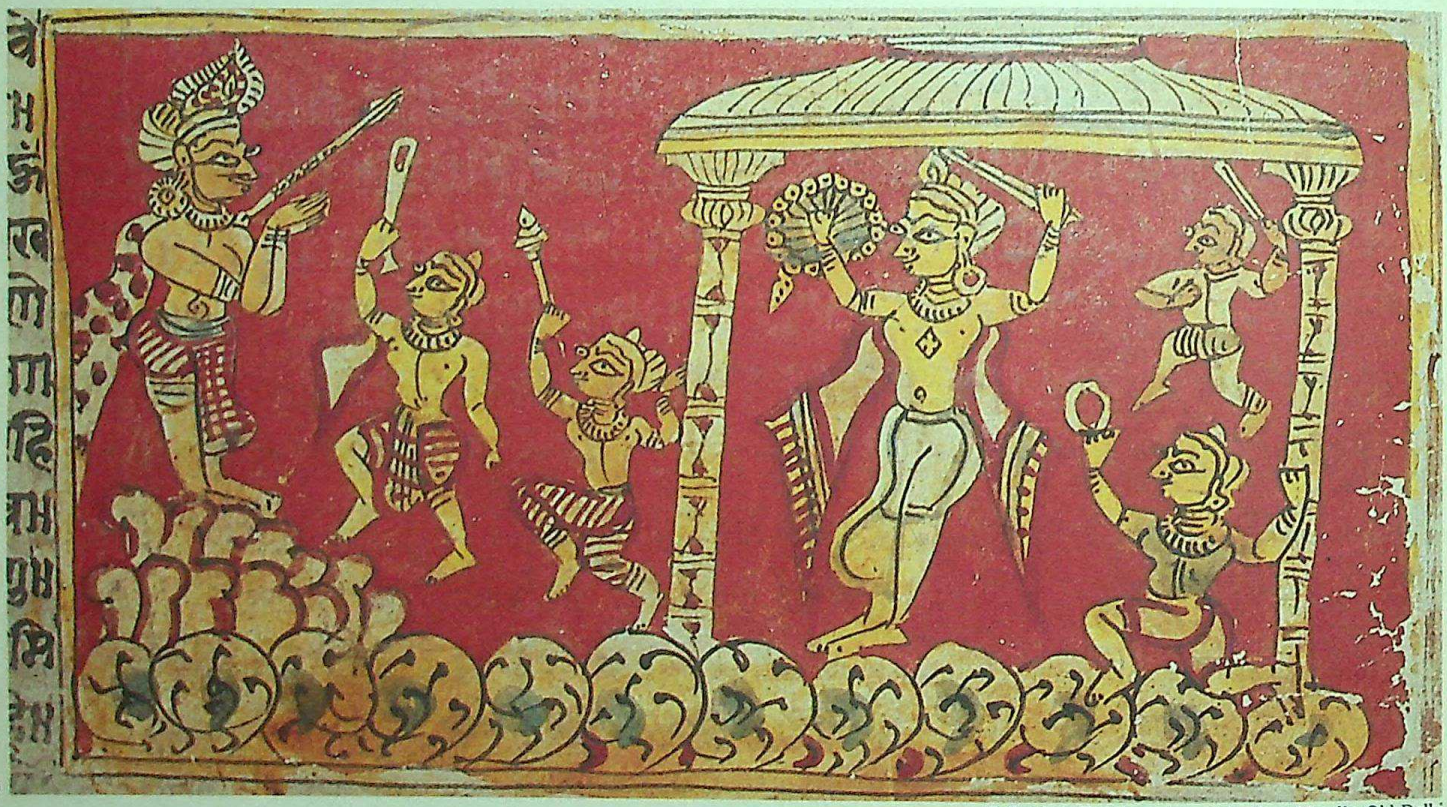

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excitement. When the strains of music reached her at dawn, Marudevi bathed and dressed herself in luxurious garments, many rings and strings of pearls. Then she made her way to Nabhi. She related her sixteen dreams to him and inquired what they might portend. After a moment of reflection, Nabhi told her that the elephant signified that she would give birth to a son of unsurpassed excellence; the bull indicated that this son would tower over others; the lion meant he would possess immense strength; the garlands indicated that he would conduct a religious order; the lustration of Lakshmi symbolised their son's lustration on Mount Meru; the moon meant that he would be an infinite source of joy; the sun signified that he would be brilliant; the two jars were symbols of countless good qualities; the fish meant that he would be happy; the lotus-lake meant that his body would bear auspicious signs; the sea indicated that he would become the lord of the earth; the throne meant that he would reign on earth; the celestial carriage indicated that he would descend from the heavens; the *nagavimana* from the netherworld meant that he would be clairvoyant; the heap of jewels meant that he would be virtuous; the smokeless fire indicated that he would reduce all his previous karma to ashes. Then Nabhi informed Marudevi that the bull she had seen enter her mouth symbolised the conception of the Tirthankara Rishabha in her womb. At this news Marudevi's heart filled with joy and exultation. || Fig. 6 ||

The god Indra immediately descended on earth to offer congratulations to the fortunate couple. After the rejoicing, Indra sent 56 *dikkakumari* goddesses to wait upon Marudevi. Among them were Shri, Hri, Dhruti, Kirti, Buddhi and Lakshmi. Throughout the term of her pregnancy, the goddesses kept Marudevi amused and entertained with stimulating conversation and intelligent games.

Nativity:

At sunrise, on the ninth day of the dark half of the month of Chaitra, when the moon was in the asterism of *uttarashadha*, Marudevi gave birth to Rishabha. Indra's throne quivered and from this he understood that the Tirthankara had been born. At the time of birth Rishabha possessed three out of the five types of knowledge: *mati-jnana, shruta-jnana* and *avadhi-jnana.* || Fig. 8 ||

Indra and his consort, Indrani descended on earth with seven contingents of the Indra-sena. This joyous procession arrived at Nabhi's palace and proceeded to the birth-chamber where Indrani cast a spell of slumber upon the new mother. Substituting a mock-child in his stead, Indrani lovingly brought the real child to Indra and the procession continued to Mount Meru. Five Indras attended upon the infant. || Fig. 21 ||

Upon reaching Mount Meru, Indra placed the infant upon a pedestal surrounded by eight auspicious symbols: an umbrella, a *chauri*, a jar, a mirror, a full vase, a flag, a palm-leaf fan and a seat. Then Indra conducted the lustration ceremony

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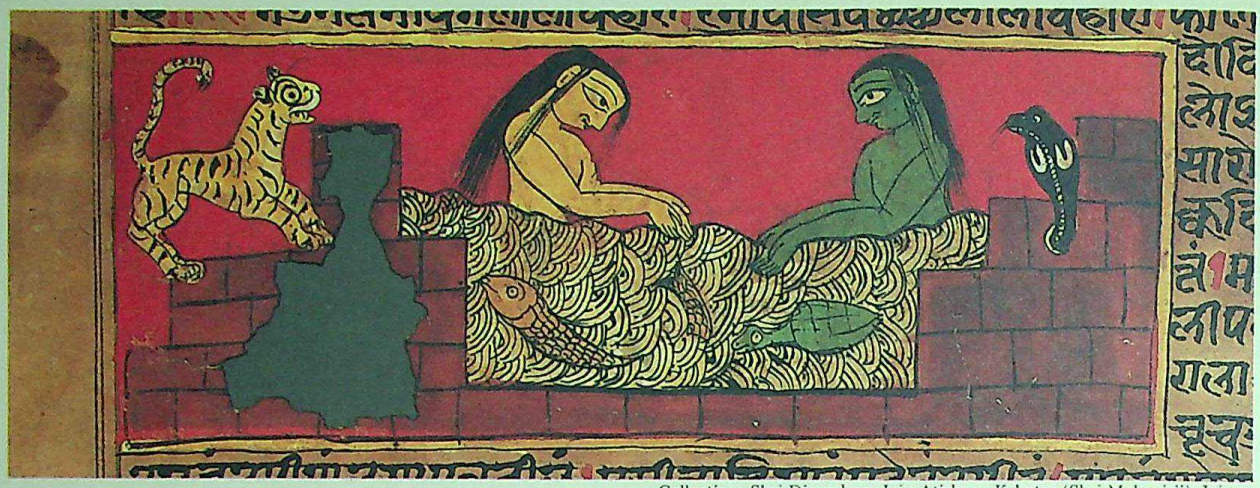

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with waters from the Ocean of Milk. To perform this rite, the gods formed a chain which extended from the base of Mount Meru to its summit. They handed pitchers filled with the water of the Ocean of Milk up to the peak of the mountain. After the lustration, Indrani decked the infant with garlands and everyone present sang hymns of praise. The procession wound its way back to Ayodhya. At the palace they replaced Rishabha and released his mother from the spell of slumber. Rishabha's parents celebrated the birth of their son with great festivity. Inspired by the jubilant atmosphere, Indra danced, continuously changing his form. This performance served as a spectacular finale to the day's events.

In the royal palace Rishabha was raised with other princes and *devakumaras.* He matured into a fine young man. At the urging of his father, he married two princesses: Yashasvi and Sunanda.

Queen Yashasvi bore Rishabha a hundred sons — the eldest of whom was Bharata — as well as a daughter named Brahmi. From Sunanda, Rishabha had one son called Bahubali and one daughter named Sundari. As his children grew, Rishabha taught them the various arts. Bharata studied *artha-shastra* and *nritya-shastra.* Another son, Rishabhasena, learnt music while the third was introduced to painting, sculpture and architecture. Bahubali studied medicine and military strategy; he also became a connoisseur of people, animals and gems. Brahmi mastered the art of writing while Sundari excelled in the science of numbers.

Meanwhile, conditions on earth were becoming increasingly inhospitable. The suffering of starving people was accentuated by disease. The patriarch, Nabhi, directed the populace to Rishabha. Aided by Indra and other gods, Rishabha created provinces and established capital cities, towns, villages and small settlements. Geographical features such as rivers and forests served to separate most villages from each other. Towns were classified according to their locality: if near rivers and mountains they were called *khat* and if near the sea, they were called *pattana.* After doing this Rishabha taught the populace six types of subsistence activities: *asi, masi, krishi, vidya, vanija* and *shilpa.* Then he categorised society into three sections: the Kshatriyas who learned the use of weapons; the Vaishyas who specialised in farming or business; and the Shudras, consisting of touchables and untouchables, who were to serve the first two sections.

Rishabha also created an elaborate code of conduct to ensure social order. The laws did not permit mobility of profession or intermarriage between classes. The people crowned Rishabha as their king with great pomp and ceremony. Rishabha established an efficient administrative system in his kingdom.

Renunciation:

The days passed with Rishabha fulfilling his royal duties and enjoying his good fortune. Indra felt that the time had come to remind Rishabha of his true mission on earth — that of propagating the Jain faith. With this in mind, Indra descended on earth accompanied by the celestial dancer, Nilanjana, whose life was nearing its end. As Nilanjana danced in Rishabha's court, she suddenly staggered, collapsed and vanished. Indra created another dancer in her place and the performance continued. But the momentary interruption left Rishabha deeply disturbed and he began to reflect on the ephemeral nature of life. Indra had succeeded in arousing the king from his complacent existence. Rishabha's musings finally led him to the decision to renounce the life of a householder and assume that of an ascetic. The *Laukantika* gods came down from heaven to strengthen Rishabha's resolve by urging him to propagate the Jain faith.

Rishabha appointed his son Bharata as King and his son Bahubali as the next in command. The coronation of the princes coincided with the renunciation rites of their father.

The gods prepared Rishabha for *diksha* by lustrating him with holy waters. After seeking permission from his parents and other members of the family, Rishabha stepped into his renunciation palanquin called Sudarshana. Chanting and singing, the gods, who were accompanied by divine musicians and dancers, carried the palanquin from Ayodhya through crowds of grieving citizens to a park outside the city.

At sunset Rishabha dismounted from the palanquin, divested himself of his lavish clothing and rich jewels and seated himself on a stone slab under a banyan tree. Facing east, he plucked out his hair in five handfuls. Indra received the hair in a gem-studded casket and later cast it into the Ocean of Milk. || Fig. 24 ||

The gods celebrated the *dikshakalyanaka* with paeans

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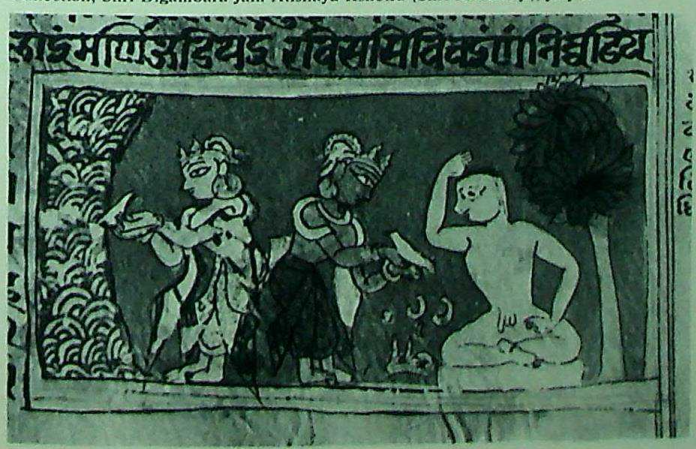

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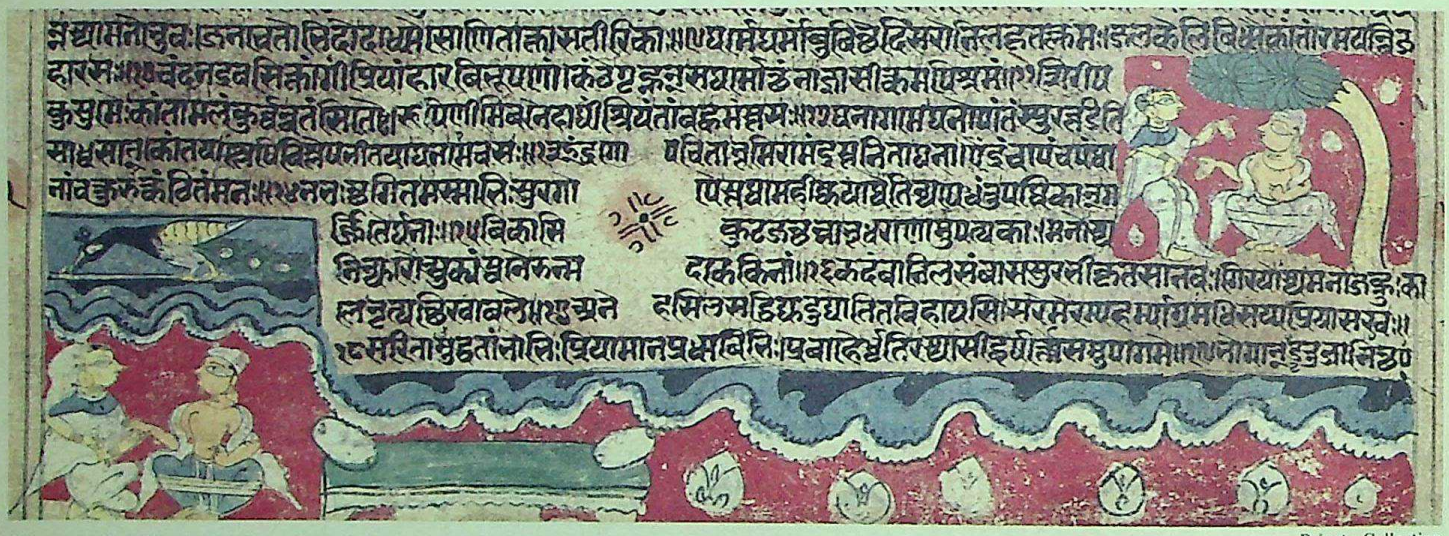

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of praise. And on taking *diksha*, Rishabha acquired the fourth kind of knowledge — *mahaparyaya-jnana*. || Fig. 9 ||

With Rishabha, 4,000 other princes also renounced wordly existence. They adopted this course purely in emulation of the former king rather than out of their inner convictions. As a consequence, they found it impossible to cope with the rigours of self-mortification and one by one they abandoned Rishabha's fold and either drifted away to other religious orders or lived as hermits in the dense forests.

Rishabha's body shone with the lustre of his austerities. After six months of continuous fasting, Rishabha emerged from the forest and went from place to place in search of food fit for an ascetic. People, unable to understand what he needed came to receive him with marvellous offerings: treasures and jewels, elephants and horses, costly robes, spicy food and exotic drinks. Parents even proffered their most beautiful daughters in marriage. || Fig. 27 ||

Rishabha quietly passed these gifts by and continued his quest. Another six months went by without Rishabha receiving the proper food with which to break his fast. As he neared Hastinapur, Shreyamsa, brother of King Somaprabha, had a dream which foretold the advent of a holy man in the town. The moment Shreyamsa set eyes on Rishabha he remembered, from his past births, that the correct way for an ascetic to break his fast was with sugarcane juice. Shreyamsa offered the juice to Rishabha and thus his year-long fast came to an end.

Omniscience:

Although many temptations came his way, Rishabha ignored them; he continued to practice meditation and penance until he attained the fifth kind of knowledge — *kevala-jnana*. At that moment the air was filled with divine music. Indra, aided by other gods, prepared the *samavasarana*. Sparkling with blue gems, it consisted of three concentric enclosures and four radial pathways surrounded by an outer wall. The outer wall was the *dhulishala*. Made of crushed gems it was as radiant as a rainbow. Its four golden gateways were shaped like fish and festooned with garlands. The *dhulishala* wall retained crystal waters filled with blossoming lotuses and beautiful aquatic creatures. Inside this region gleamed the first enclosure which had gold and rows of pearls along its crest. Its sides bore representations of human figures and its four silver gateways were adorned with glowing gems and auspicious symbols. Near the gateways were theatres for dance and drama. Further in, was the region of forest groves, consisting of *ashoka* trees, *sataparna* trees, *champaka* trees and mango trees. The wooded area contained pleasure pavilions, lotus lakes, lush groves and sandy beaches. In the centre of each grove was a *caitya* tree decorated with flags, bells and auspicious symbols. The region of forest groves encircled the region of flags. Within it was the second enclosure which was made of silver. This enclosure retained the region of *kalpavrikshas*. This region surrounded the region of mansions through which ran a broad highway bordered with huge *stupas*. The region of mansions encircled the third and last enclosure which was made of crystal. This enclosure was covered by the *shri-mandapa*. Within, creatures from all three worlds had assembled to hear Rishabha preach. In the centre was a platform which held the *gandhakuti* for Rishabha. Rishabha sat upon a lion throne, though he did not touch it. Above him stood a three-tiered parasol and behind him shone a resplendent halo; near him was an *ashoka* tree. On all sides, 64 *yaksha* attendants waved white *chauris*. The skies were filled with paeans of praise and the beating of kettle drums. The *ashoka* tree, the throne, the parasol, the halo, the celestial music, the shower of flowers, the *chauris* and the kettle drums are the *astapratiharas* — the eight attributes of a Tirthankara when he attains omniscience.

Rishabha's face could be seen from all four sides and when he spoke it was like the sound of thunder. His message was like a ray of the sun which dispells the darkness, and the minds of all who had assembled there were illuminated.

The *kevalin* gave a discourse on the various aspects of Jain philosophy including soul and matter; then he described the different types of creatures and explained the geography of the Jambudvipa and the arrangement of the celestial world as well as the netherworld. || Fig. 10 ||

Rishabha remained a *kevalin* for one *purva*. His religious order comprised monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen. Rishabhasena, his second son, was his chief *ganadhara* and Brahmi and Sundari were his chief nuns.

Bharata's Campaign

On the day Rishabha attained *kevala-jnana*, King Bharata received news that his queen had given birth to a son and heir and also that a *chakra-ratna* had appeared in his armoury.

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Bharata was overjoyed at the occurrence of these extremely significant auspicious events. For a moment he was thrown into confusion: he did not know what to do first—visit his father, bless his son or go and see the *chakra* in his armoury. He decided to go to his father first and offer praise. There, pious persons desirous of obtaining emancipation from *samsara* had gathered around Rishabha to hear him preach. The Jina explained the doctrinal concepts of *jiva* and *ajiva*, and other tenets of the Jain religion such as the fourteen *gunasthanas*. He also described the geography of the Jambudvipa and other *dvipas* with their rivers and mountains. He then spoke of the heavenly regions where the gods dwelled. On hearing his discourse eighty-four lakh princes renounced the world and became monks. Bharata returned to Ayodhya.

The appearance of the *chakra-ratna* in the armoury of Bharata meant that Bharata was destined to become a Chakravartin, a world conqueror who would subjugate the six continents of the earth. Bharata offered prayers to the *chakra-ratna*. || Fig. 11 ||

In autumn, when the sky was clear and the roads were dry, Bharata decided to embark on his campaign. He first saluted holy men, offered prayers to the *chakra-ratna* and gave gifts to the needy and the poor. Then Bharata and his huge army commenced their march. The army comprised chariots, elephant-riders, cavalry and infantry led by the *chakra*. After crossing the river Ganges the soldiers came to the shores of the eastern ocean and set up camp. That night Bharata prayed and observed a fast. The following morning he took his bow and discharged an arrow in the direction of the King of Magadha Tirtha. The arrow dropped into the house of the king who was at first enraged. But on reflection he decided that it would be futile to wage a war against a Chakravartin and wiser to pay tribute and accept his sovereignity. || Fig. 19 ||

In the same way Bharata established his supremacy over the King of Vartana Tirtha in the south. Thereafter he moved westwards, crossed the river Indus and camped there. || Fig. 12 ||

After penetrating the Lavanasamudra, Bharata subjugated the King of Prabhasu Tirtha. || Fig. 16 ||

Bharata continued his campaign and successfully conquered various other regions. The King of the forest tribes paid tribute to him. || Fig. 14 ||

After bringing the entire southern region under his command, he went to the Vijayargha Mountain to conquer the remaining three continents. While King Bharata and his army were encamped on the Vijayargha Mountain a heavenly being requested King Bharata to strike the mountain-side. Bharata complied, a cave burst open and there was great excitement. Led by the *chakra-ratna*, Bharata's army entered the cave but darkness hampered their progress. The commander of the army then inscribed the sun and moon on the walls of the cave and the light of these heavenly bodies illuminated their way.

After passing through the cave the army came to the region of the Nagas. The march was impeded by two rivers, but the *sthapati* constructed a bridge and the army continued on. The Mlechchha Kings, Avarta and Kirata, finding Bharata's army invading their region, invoked the aid of the King of the Nagas, who stirred up a storm. The rain came down in torrents for a day and a night while the soldiers forged ahead. Bharata used the *charma* gem to form an umbrella over the army. The army moved forward and vanquished the Mlechchha Kings who then offered tribute to Bharata. || Fig. 15 ||

Marching along the banks of the river Indus, Bharata proceeded towards the Himavanta Mountain. Upon reaching the mountain he sat on a heap of *darbha* grass and observed a fast before discharging an arrow in the direction of the guardian deity of the mountain. When the arrow dropped into the pavilion where he sat, the deity was furious. But upon reading Bharata's name on the arrow, he decided against hostilities and accepted Bharata's sovereignity.

Bharata's campaign took him to the Vrishabha Mountain. There he discovered that all four sides of the mountain were covered with names of kings from the past. Bharata managed to find a space, where he inscribed his name. Thus he completed his conquest of the six continents of Bharatavarsha. All the gods praised him on this occasion. || Fig. 13 ||

Skirting the base of the Himavanta Mountain, Bharata and his army marched along the river Ganges. The deity of the river lustrated Bharata and offered him gifts. Marching on, the army arrived at the Timisa cave of the Vijayargha Mountain. Bharata asked his generals to strike open the cave. || Fig. 17, 18 ||

Bharata's army could not enter the cave without the permission of Nami and Vinami who resided on the slopes of the mountain as lords of Vidyadharas. Bharata sent messengers with instructions to demand tribute. Nami and Vinami acquiesced, and with the light of the *kagani* gem the army moved on until it came to Mount Kailasha where Rishabha preached the Jain doctrine. Bharata stopped to offer prayers to his father on Mount Kailasha. || Fig. 20 ||

Bharata returned to Ayodhya after traversing various lands. Much to his surprise, the *chakra-ratna* would not enter the city, but instead stopped outside the gate. On enquiry, Bharata learnt that the reason for this was because he had not yet subjugated his brothers. Therefore, his conquest of the world was incomplete. When he heard this Bharata, in anger, sent messages to his brothers to accept his supremacy. All of them found the proposition demeaning; and all of them except Bahubali renounced their kingdoms and joined their father's religious order as monks. Bahubali challenged Bharata to war.

Bharata prepared for battle with Bahubali. Arrogantly, he

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declared that if he spared Bahubali's life it would be out of reverence for their father. He was determined, however, to subdue Bahubali and hold him as firmly as an elephant tied with chains.

The armies of the two brothers angrily confronted one another. The soldiers on both sides poised for attack and waited for the battle calls to be given. Suddenly, the elder statesmen of both Bharata and Bahubali stood between the two armies and urged them not to fight. They advised that disputes between brothers should be settled between the individual parties; that the brothers should not compromise the lives of countless innocent soldiers. The two brothers concurred and agreed to resolve the matter through a series of three duels which would take the form of *drishti-yudha*, *jala-yudha* and, lastly, *malla-yudha*. || Fig. 22 ||

The brothers engaged in these duels and Bahubali won the first two. In the third duel Bahubali's superiority was also evident. As he lifted Bharata in his arms to dash him to the ground, Bharata called for his *chakra-ratna*. The *chakra-ratna* appeared but instead of harming Bahubali, it went round him and stood still on his right side. At that moment, Bahubali realised that he was about to commit the sin of fratricide and he gently put Bharata down. || Fig. 23 ||

Bahubali's Penance

Though he was the victor, Bahubali was full of remorse because he felt that in defeating his brother he had insulted the Chakravartin. He begged his brother's forgiveness, fled to the forest, pulled out his hair and assumed the *kayotasarga* pose. There he remained in meditation for so long that creepers wound themselves around his body and birds nested in his beard. In spite of severe self-mortification, he failed to attain *kevala-jnana*. Concerned and perturbed by his brother's condition, Bharata sought the wise advice of the Tirthankara who informed him that Bahubali still suffered from pride and resentment. Accompanied by his two sisters Bharata then went to Bahubali, prostrated himself and his sisters whispered, "Dismount from the elephant." At first Bahubali could not perceive the meaning of these words but, in a flash, he understood that his sisters referred to the elephant of pride. With this realisation Bahubali attained *kevala-jnana* and *moksha* in a matter of moments.

The Previous Existences of Rishabha

Bharata created a class of holy persons known as Brahmans. He asked them to wear the sacred thread and showered them with generous gifts.

One night, Bharata had a bad dream which disturbed him deeply. He went to his father, Rishabha, and requested an interpretation of the dream. He also asked his father to explain the meritorious acts with which he had become a Jina himself; how Bahubali had become a strong man and how Somaprabha had become a great ruler.

Rishabha began his discourse by saying that Bharata's dreams showed the deterioration which would occur in the moral standards of human beings as the cosmic cycle approached the *dushama* phase.

Then Rishabha proceeded to describe and refute the various theories of Creation. He stated that the elements which constitute matter are earth, air, fire and water. In the midst of this universe is situated the human world, known as Triyalokya, with many islands and oceans. There, on the western side of Mount Meru, in the region called Gandhela, ruled a king named Mahabala, son of Atibala. Mahabala had four ministers, each of whom believed in a different religion. One of them was Swayambuddha who was a follower of Jainism.

One day, Mahabala and Swayambuddha were on their way to pay homage to the Jina when they met monks who prophesied that Mahabala was destined to become a Tirthankara in his future birth. They informed Mahabala that in his past birth he was King Jayavarman, who became a monk. As a result of the good karma he had acquired through penance he was born as Mahabala.

Mahabala began to practise austerities towards the end of his life and was reborn as god Lalitanga with Svayamprabha as his consort.

Lalitanga, in his next birth, was born as Vajrajamgha, son of King Vajrabahu. Svayamprabha was born as princess Shrimati. One day, when Shrimati was half asleep, she had a dream which reminded her of her former birth, and her former husband Lalitanga.

She became despondent. Her parents decided to find the person she loved. Shrimati took a large piece of cloth and on it she painted the portrait of her husband and herself in their former births as well as several episodes from their lives together. The remaining areas she filled with auspicious and decorative motifs. Shrimati's nurse took the painted cloth, *pata*, to a Jain temple and spread it out, announcing that princess Shrimati would marry the one who could identify the scenes on it. Several princes from different regions arrived to try their luck but without success.

In the meanwhile, Shrimati's father arrived and narrated the story of his former births to his daughter. In one of his births, the person who was his mother, was born later as the god Lalitanga – Shrimati's consort in her previous birth. He narrated the various births of the god Lalitanga and informed her that Lalitanga was currently known as Vajrajamgha, prince of Utpalakheda.

Shrimati's nurse wandered from place to place with the painted *pata* until she came to Utpalakheda. There, as

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was her practice, she spread out the *pata*. When Vajrajamgha came to the temple and saw the painting he fainted. When he regained consciousness, he remembered his past birth and asked the nurse the whereabouts of Shrimati. When Vajrajamgha finally located his beloved, he and Shrimati were united in matrimony. || Fig. 25 ||

Vajrajamgha and Shrimati went through several more births: Vajrajamgha as Shridahara, Suvidhi, Achyutendra, Vijranabhi and Sawarthasiddhamindra. Shrimati was born as the gods Svayamprabha, Keshav, Pratindra, Dhanadeva and Ahamindra. In his current birth the god Lalitanga was born as Rishabha while Svayamprabha was born as Shreyamsa. Shreyamsa knew the correct manner in which a Jain monk can end his fast.

After hearing these stories about his father's former births, Bharata returned to Ayodhya where he performed propitiatory rites to counteract his bad dreams.

Other Related Tales

King Somaprabha, son of Bahubali, had fourteen heirs, of whom Jaya was the eldest. When Jaya was invited to attend the *svayamvara* of the princess Sulochana, she chose him as her husband. Prince Arkakirti, who was also present, was consumed with jealousy and he challenged Jaya to a battle. Jaya emerged the victor and married Sulochana. || Fig. 26 ||

One day while King Jaya was holding court, he remembered his past birth as a pigeon. His wife, Sulochana, had also been, in her previous birth, a pigeon as well as his mate. Jaya asked his wife to narrate the tale of their former existences. Sulochana recounted the story of herself as Prabhavati and of Jaya as Hiranyavarman, and then she spoke of their lives together as a gardener and his wife. She continued the narrative, describing their lives as Sukanta and Rativega. During that birth, they had met a young monk who, when asked why he had taken the monastic vows at such an early age, described his life history.

Jaya asked Sulochana to continue and Sulochana then discussed the adventures of Shripala which began when he recognised a male dancer as being a woman disguised as a man. Shripala was abducted by a demon in the form of a horse. He escaped from the demon and met six Vidyadhara girls all of whom he married. He also married three other women, one of whom was Sukhavati.

Sukhavati possessed miraculous powers and once she carried Shripala through the sky until they came to a region where they met two Vidyadharas. The Vidyadharas informed him that if he cut a stone pillar into two he would become a Chakravartin. Shripala broke the pillar in half and in course of time was able to collect all the miraculous gems that a Chakravartin should possess. After many adventures, Shripala returned home. || Fig. 28 ||

Sometime later the *chakra-ratna* made an appearance in Shripala's armoury. Shripala became a monk and practised penance under his son, the Monk Gunapala, who was destined to become a Tirthankara.

King Jaya, on hearing these tales from Queen Sulochana, recalled his past births and both of them went to Mount Kailasha to offer worship to Rishabha. There they renounced the life of material pleasure and were accepted into the monastic fold.

Rishabha's Liberation

King Bharata had a dream in which Mount Meru was shaken and according to the priests it signified that Rishabha would soon be liberated from the Ocean of Rebirth. Bharata hurried to Mount Kailasha.

Indra and his retinue had come to celebrate the last of the five auspicious events in the life of a Tirthankara: the *mokshakalyanaka*. Indra and the other gods made a funeral pyre from the wood of fragrant trees. The Agnikumara gods produced fire with which to light it and Rishabha's mortal remains were reduced to ashes. On the fourteenth day of the dark half of the month of Magha, Rishabha attained *moksha* and his liberated soul ascended to the *siddhashila.*

Bharata returned to Ayodhya. One day, he found a gray hair on his head and at this indication he handed over his kingdom to his son, renounced the world, attained omniscience and became emancipated from the Ocean of Rebirth.

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28

ILLUSTRATIONS

Adi-Purana (Part I) paper; *c.* 1425-1450 A.D.; probably Delhi; Western Indian Style: Figs. 1, 3, 4.

(Part II) paper; *c.* 1450-1475 A.D.; probably Delhi-Gwalior; *Chaurapanchashika* Style: Figs. 5, 8, 25.

Adi-Purana; paper; 1606 A.D.; Mozamabad (near Jaipur); Rajasthani School: Fig. 2.

Maha-Purana; paper; 1540 A.D.; Palam (near Delhi); *Chaurapanchashika* Style: Figs. 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, 28.

Maha-Purana; paper; *c.* 1420 A.D.; probably Delhi-Gwalior; Western Indian Style: Figs. 19, 23.

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Kalpa-Sutra

The *Kalpa-Sutra* is among the most revered books of the Shvetambara Jains, as well as the most ancient. Attributed to Acharya Bhadrabahu who lived during the fourth century B.C., the text represents a section of the Jain canon. It is actually the eighth chapter of a larger canonical work, the *Dasha-Shruta-Skanda* and is known by one of the two titles: *Pajjosavana-Kalpa* or *Pajjosamana-Kalpa.* The term *pajjosavana* in the first title can be equated with *paryushana* which in Jain literature signifies the spending of four months of the rainy season in one place. In this context the word *paryushana* has a wider connotation than when used to denote the well-known eight-day spiritual festival which is celebrated in the month of Bhadrapada (August-September). The word *pajjosamana* from the second title can be equated with *paryushana-samana,* which implies forgiveness. The term *kalpa* denotes conduct, 'right behaviour' or prescribed rules. Thus this chapter, when referred to as *Pajjosavana-Kalpa,* means "conduct appropriate during the period of rain-rest" and, when called the *Pajjosamana-Kalpa,* indicates "conduct governed by forgiveness." Both titles are closely related and when designated as the *Kalpa-Sutra* indicate a treatise concerned with the correct forgiving conduct that is followed by the ordained during the rainy season—from the day of the full moon in the month of Ashadha to the same day in the month of Kartika.

For Jain monks, nuns and acolytes, the rainy season is a period of rest during which they temporarily give up their itinerant ways and settle down in one place. They utilise this time for spiritual cleansing which includes fasting, meditation, the reading of scriptures and preaching. The eight-day festival of *Paryushana*—from the thirteenth day of the dark half of the month of Bhadrapada to the fourth day of the bright half of the same month—takes place during this period and is celebrated with great religious fervour by the entire Jain community. During these days the Jain laity, under the guidance of holy teachers, aspires to spiritual upliftment through fasting, attending religious discourses and visiting places of worship. The spiritual activities include the recitations of the *Kalpa-Sutra,* and therefore it enjoys a special importance among religious texts. And though it is only a chapter of the *Dasha-Shruta-Skanda,* the *Kalpa-Sutra* has the status of an autonomous treatise.

The *Kalpa-Sutra* is known as the *sutra* of 1200 *shlokas.* Written in prose, the work consists of three parts: the *Jina Charita,* the *Sthaviravali* and the *Sadhu Samachari.* The first of these contains an account of the lives of the twenty-four Tirthankaras; it begins with a description of the life of the twenty-fourth, and the most recent, Tirthankara known as Mahavira. The text moves backwards in time, narrating briefly the lives of the twenty-third Tirthankara, Parshva, and the twenty-second Tirthankara, Nemi. Thereafter only the names of the Tirthankaras are mentioned except when the narrative comes to the first Tirthankara, Rishabha. The life of Rishabha, again, is described in some detail. The second section of this text, the *Sthaviravali,* consists of the names of leaders who founded the numerous sub-sects which, over the centuries, have fragmented the Jain ecclesiastical order. In the last section, the *Sadhu Samachari,* the code of conduct prescribed for monks and nuns during the rainy season appears in detail.

According to the Jain tradition all monks recited the *Kalpa-Sutra* on the fiftieth night after the commencement of their rest for the rainy season. The custom of reciting the *Kalpa-Sutra* to large congregations where the laity also participated became popular sometime around the fifth century A.D. and has continued till today. This practice necessitated the ready availability of copies of the *Kalpa-Sutra,* and, as a result, it became the most reproduced text. Hundreds of *Kalpa-Sutra* manuscripts were prepared between the twelfth and the twentieth centuries

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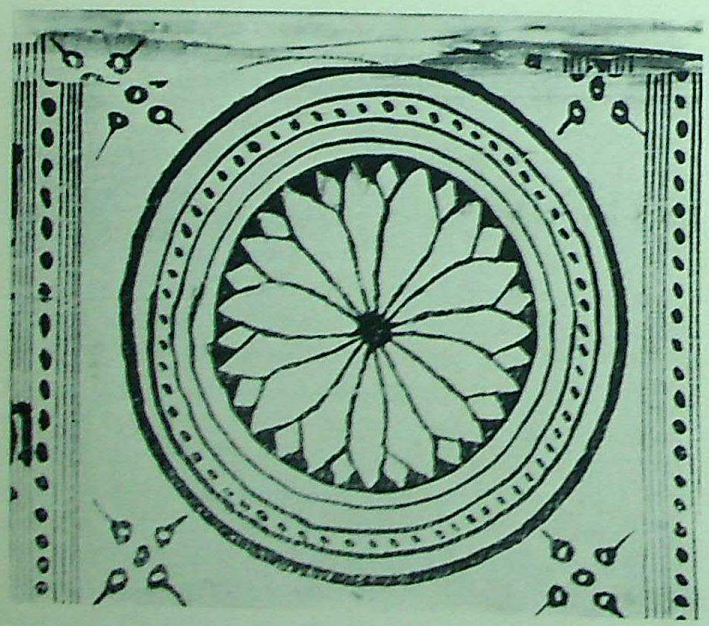
and kept in the *shastra-bhandaras.* Some were embellished with miniatures and the more sumptuous ones were adorned with border decorations. Certain manuscripts were written with gold and silver inks. The *Kalpa-Sutra* was the most frequently and profusely illustrated text of the Shvetambara Jains, and while most illustrations corresponded to verses in the text, it was not unusual to find a few which did not find explicit mention. Such illustrations generally occurred in the sections referring to the lives of the Tirthankaras Parshva, Nemi and Rishabha and represented legends familiar to the laity. Thus, even though the text did not mention the episode, the viewer experienced no difficulty in identifying the subject of the illustration. Occasionally, several scenes were combined in one miniature; at other times they were represented separately. The later manuscripts—painted after A.D. 1450—were as a rule more elaborately and profusely illustrated.



The Text

The *Kalpa-Sutra* begins with the *namokaramantra* or the five-fold obeisance to the Arhatas, the Siddhas, the Acharyas, the Upadhyayas, and to all Sadhus.

Jina Charita

The life of each Tirthankara follows the same pattern: (1) he descends on earth after having spent a long period of time in one of the celestial spheres; (2) his life is marked by *panchakalyanaka*: conception, birth, renunciation, omniscience and liberation. At the time of his birth, the gods shower the earth with riches, and Indra takes the infant Tirthankara for his lustration on top of Mount Meru. At the time of renunciation, the *Laukantika* gods hail the Tirthankara for his decision to enter the life of a homeless monk. When he attains omniscience, the gods build a large *samavasarana* wherein men and beasts can hear the Jina preach. In the life of the last Tirthankara, Mahavira, there occurred a sixth auspicious event—the transference of the embryo from the womb of Brahmani Devananda to that of Kshatriyani Trishala.

Life of Mahavira

Of the six major events in the life of Bhagavana Mahavira, five occurred when the moon was in conjunction with the *uttarphalguni* constellation. It was during this conjunction that he (1) descended into the womb of a Brahman woman, Devananda; (2) was transferred to that of the Kshatriya lady Trishala; (3) was born; (4) pulled out his hair, and became a homeless mendicant and (5) attained supreme knowledge. The sixth and last event, which was *moksha,* occurred when the moon was in conjunction with the *svati* constellation.

Conception:

On the sixth day of the bright half of the month of Ashadha, after completing his life of twenty *sagaropamas* in the celestial abode Pushpottara, Bhagavana Mahavira descended on earth. At that time he was in possession of three out of the five types of knowledge: *mati-jnana, shruta-jnana* and *avadhi-jnana.* He was conceived at midnight in the womb of Devananda, the wife of Brahman Rishabhadatta, who lived in the Brahman quarter in the town of Kundagrama in Magadha. At this time the cosmic cycle was on its downward course and nearing the end of its fourth phase. Twenty-three Tirthankaras had preceded Mahavira and prophesied his coming.

On the night when Bhagavana Mahavira descended into the womb of Devananda, and as she lay half asleep on her bed, she had fourteen wondrous and lucky dreams—auspicious and sublime. She saw an elephant, a bull, a lion, the lustration of goddess Shri, a garland, the moon, the sun, a flag, an urn, a lotus pond, the sea, a celestial vehicle, a heap of jewels and a burning fire. ‖ Fig. 1 ‖

After experiencing these supremely fortunate visions Devananda awoke, filled with joy and deep contentment, and the hair on her body stood erect like the petals of the fragrant *kadamba* flower at the touch of raindrops. She rose from her bed and, with the unhurried gait of a graceful swan, walked to where her husband Rishabhadatta lay sleeping. She venerated him, saying "may you be victorious, may you be ever successful," and seating herself by his side, bowed to him, touching her forehead with the ten fingertips of her folded palms. She then recounted her lucky dreams and asked him

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what they indicated. Rishabhadatta was pleased with her words and after pondering over them in the light of his inborn wisdom and acquired knowledge, he commented, "These noble dreams foretell a happy enjoyable future and also indicate the birth of a son, a beautiful child. He will possess a flawless physique and an alert and intelligent mind. His body will bear auspicious signs. After infancy and childhood, when he becomes a youth, he will be learned in many disciplines and sacred lore. Indeed you have witnessed dreams that augur good fortune." This interpretation gladdened Devananda's heart.

At that time Indra, known also as Shakra, the thousand-eyed king of the gods, the wielder of the thunderbolt, the one who rides the elephant Airavata, was presiding on the throne of the celestial sphere Sudharma. Surrounded by his queens and bodyguards, attired in garments as spotless as the sky and wearing trembling earrings wrought in gold, he spent his time enjoying pleasures such as drama, story-telling, singing and music. || Fig. 2 ||

From the heavenly heights Indra kept watch over earth. Through his *avadhi-jnana* he noted that Mahavira had entered the womb of Devananda. He rejoiced at this event, rose from his throne, placed his seamless robe over his left shoulder and, with palms folded to form a bud, he took seven or eight steps in the direction of Mahavira. He knelt and did obeisance by thrice touching his forehead to the floor, and in reverence praised the Tirthankara. || Fig. 3 ||

Exchange of Embryos:

Indra was, however, deeply concerned. He reflected, "It has never been, nor will it ever be that either an Arhata or a Chakravartin is born in a minor clan or in families of humble origin or the priestly Brahman caste. They are always born in powerful, princely and affluent clans belonging to the warrior Kshatriya caste." If an exception did occur the established practice for Indra was to have the embryo of the Arhata transferred to the womb of a Kshatriya woman. Accordingly, Indra resolved to have the embryo of Mahavira transferred from the womb of the Brahmani Devananda to that of the Kshatriyani Trishala, who lived in the Kshatriya sector of the same town, and to have the embryo in the womb of Trishala inserted into that of Devananda. He summoned the commander of his infantry, Harinegameshi, and instructed him to carry out the exchange of the embryos. || Fig. 4 ||

Harinegameshi set forth on his mission. With great speed he traversed vast distances, crossing oceans and continents, till he arrived at Kundagrama. He went directly to the house of Brahman Rishabhadatta and, after performing the ritual of obeisance to the embryo of the Tirthankara, he cast a spell which threw Devananda and her attendants into a deep slumber. Then with the words, "May the Venerable One graciously permit me," he gently took the embryo of Mahavira in his palm and carried it to Trishala in the palace of her husband, King Siddhartha. There, after casting a similar spell on Trishala and her attendants, he exchanged the embryos and carried the embryo from Trishala's womb to that of Devananda. His task accomplished, he returned to Indra's court. || Fig. 5 ||

On the night that Mahavira was placed into the womb of Kshatriyani Trishala, she saw the same fourteen auspicious dreams that Devananda had witnessed at the time of Mahavira's conception. The exterior of Trishala's bed chamber was plastered in gleaming white and its interior was decorated with murals bathed in a soft glow emanating from the gem-

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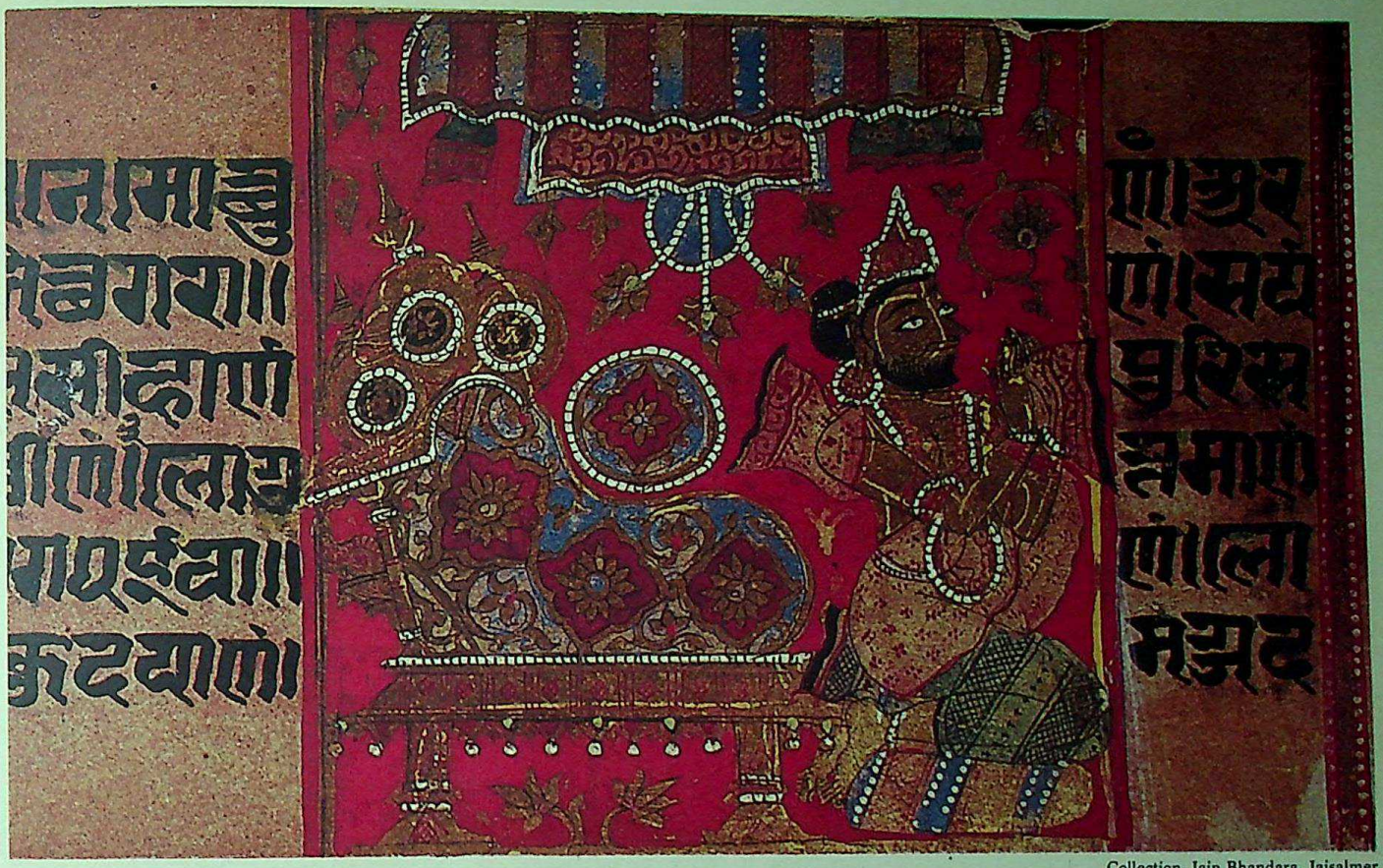

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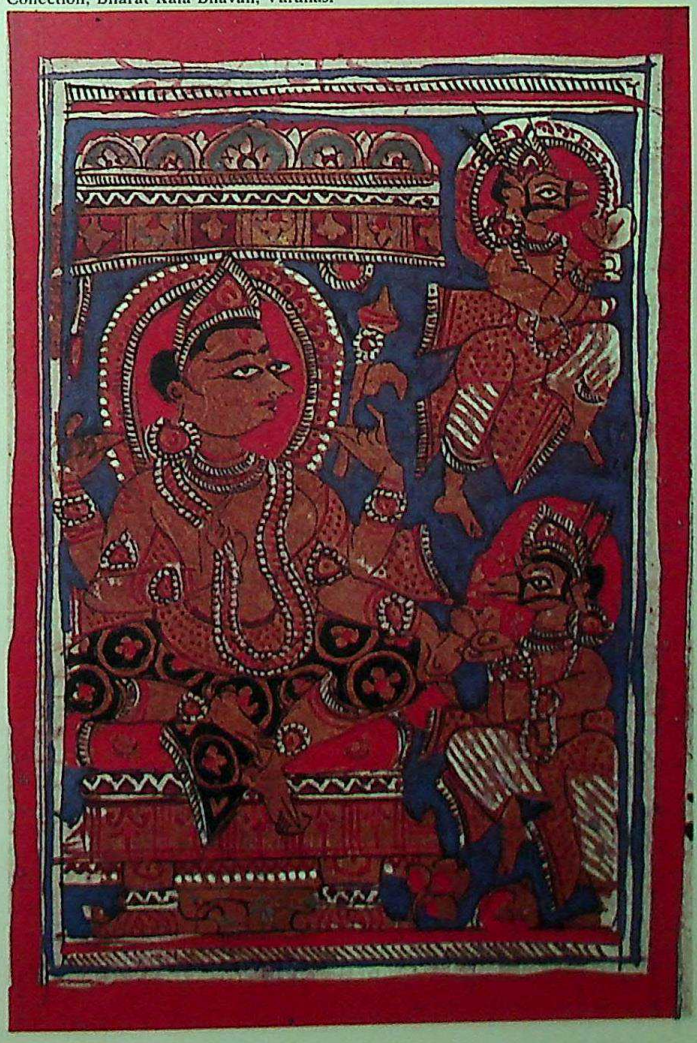

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studded ceiling. The floor, smooth and covered with auspicious signs and diagrams, was heaped with fragrant variegated flowers and surrounded by curling fumes of burning incense. Trishala lay dozing on a soft and pliant mattress with pillows at the head and the foot of the couch. Spread on the couch was an exquisite coverlet, sprinkled with fine scented powders. A canopy of red netting, soft to the touch like fur, covered the bed. Kshatriyani Trishala saw in her dreams: (1) a loudly trumpeting four-tusked elephant, whiter than a heap of pearls, with ichor streaming from its temples; (2) a resplendent, majestic white bull, whiter than a heap of white lotus petals; (3) a magnificent lion with the sheen of moonbeams and sharp teeth and claws; (4) the bejewelled goddess Shri, her face like the full moon, seated at the top of the Himavat mountains on a lotus in a lotus lake; (5) a fragrant garland of white and coloured flowers floating down from the firmament; (6) the full moon shining white like milk foam and bright like a polished mirror; (7) the rising sun, red and refulgent, dispelling darkness; (8) a large fluttering flag, fastened to a staff of pure gold and crested with iridescent peacock feathers; (9) a silver urn filled to the brim with crystal-clear water, adorned with a wreath of scented flowers that bloom in the different seasons of the year; (10) a lotus lake with thousand-petalled lotuses, playful fish and cranes and ducks; (11) the Ocean of Milk, its waters surging in waves in all directions, flecked with camphor-coloured foam; (12) a magnificent celestial vehicle of 1008 columns made of gold, inlaid with gems and festooned with pearls; (13) a heap of jewels as high as Mount Meru, illuminating the sky with their brilliance; (14) a blazing fire with flames leaping and fusing with one another, lighting up the firmament. Fig. 6

A thrill of happiness coursed through Trishala's body and she awoke with a gladdened spirit. Contemplating her dreams, she walked with the gait of a regal swan to the couch where Siddhartha slept. Very gently she awakened him and, after taking his permission, narrated the dreams that had come to her that night. Fig. 7

Siddhartha was transported with joy when he heard Trishala's dreams. He reflected upon them and addressed Trishala: "The dreams augur long life, prosperity and happiness. They predict the birth of a son who will bring fame and glory to the family and will be the crowning ornament of the clan. He will have perfect health and will bear auspicious marks. When he grows up our son will be a mighty warrior and rule over a large kingdom." Trishala was filled with delight and after bowing to Siddhartha rose from her chair and returned to her bed chamber. Afraid that the potency of her good dreams might be diluted by bad dreams, Trishala did not sleep that night but spent it listening to moral and virtuous tales of gods and great men.

Early next day, at day-break, Siddhartha summoned his attendants and instructed them to have the outer audience-hall swept and decorated with perfumed flowers and innundated with the fumes of incense. He ordered a throne to be placed there.

On the following day, at dawn, King Siddhartha went to his gymnasium for his exercises in athletic jousting, fencing and wrestling, after which his attendants anointed and massaged his body in accordance with the four-fold technique of shampooing. The King felt stimulated; his senses and body were revitalised. He then proceeded to his bath chamber with its chequered mosaic floor of precious stones. After his bath the attendants applied sandal paste to Siddhartha's body and helped him attire himself in costly apparel, ornaments and floral garlands. Fig. 8

King Siddhartha, attired in rich raiment and jewels, made his way to the audience-hall. His attendants held a royal parasol above his head and fanned him with *chauris.* Accompanying him were numerous chieftains, army officers, soothsayers, caravan leaders and ambassadors. He appeared "like the resplendent moon emerging from a cloud surrounded by bright planets, stars and constellations."

King Siddhartha entered the outer audience-hall and, facing east, took his seat on the throne. After performing protective rites with mustard seeds, he arranged for eight chairs to be covered with white cloth for the soothsayers. He then requested a beautifully designed and embroidered screen to be placed near him—neither too far nor too near. Behind it, he had a stately chair installed for Trishala. Thereafter Siddhartha instructed his attendants to fetch the dream diviners who were well-versed in the science of prognostics. They arrived in a group and King Siddhartha received them and duly honoured them with propitiatory gifts. With humility and respect, the King recounted the dreams that had come to Queen Trishala and requested them to explain their significance. The soothsayers discussed the meaning of the dreams among themselves and informed King Siddhartha that "the science of dreams speaks of seventy-two dreams, thirty of which are major and the remaining forty-two minor. The fourteen dreams that you have described are from the group of thirty and appear to mothers of religious leaders or world conquerors at the moment of conception. O King, the Queen has seen the most auspicious of dreams. They presage good fortune and foretell the birth of a son who will become a valiant hero and a great lord. He will be a Chakravartin with dominions extending in all four directions. But, it may also happen that he will become a great religious leader, a Tirthankara." King Siddhartha was overjoyed and proferred generous gifts to the soothsayers. He climbed down from his throne, walked behind the screen to Trishala and repeated the

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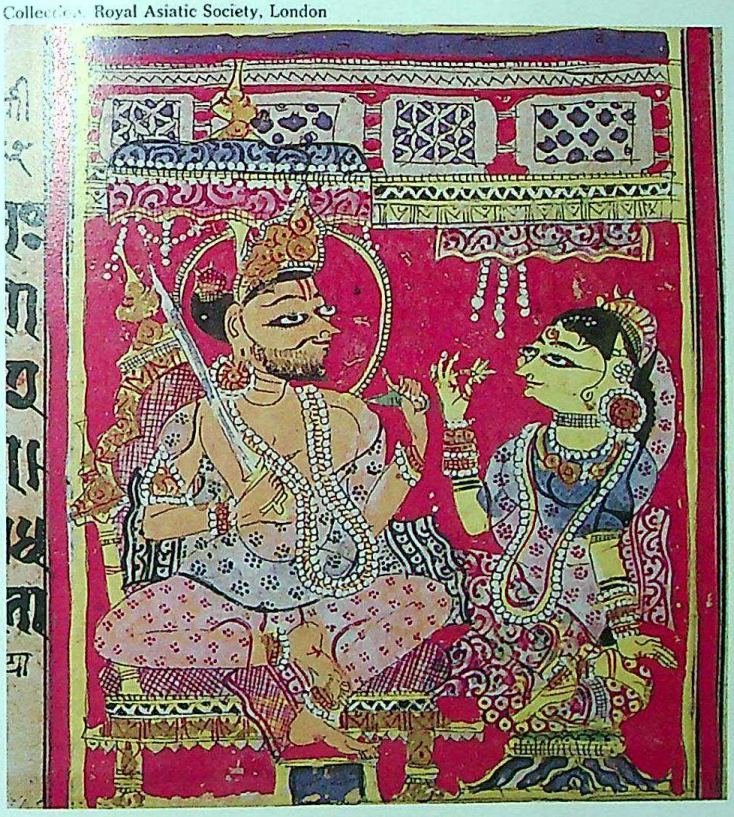

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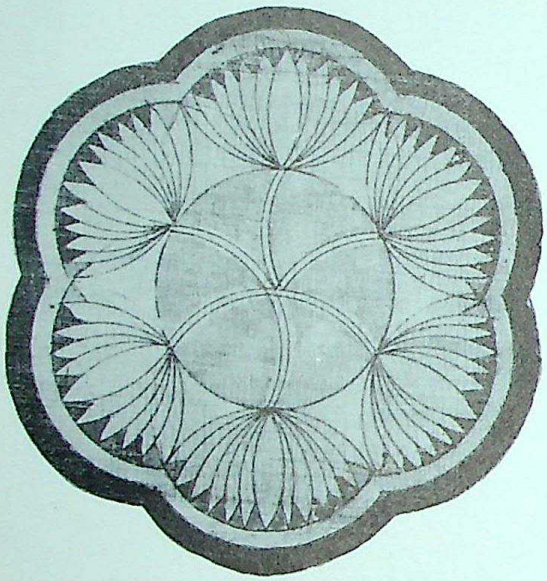

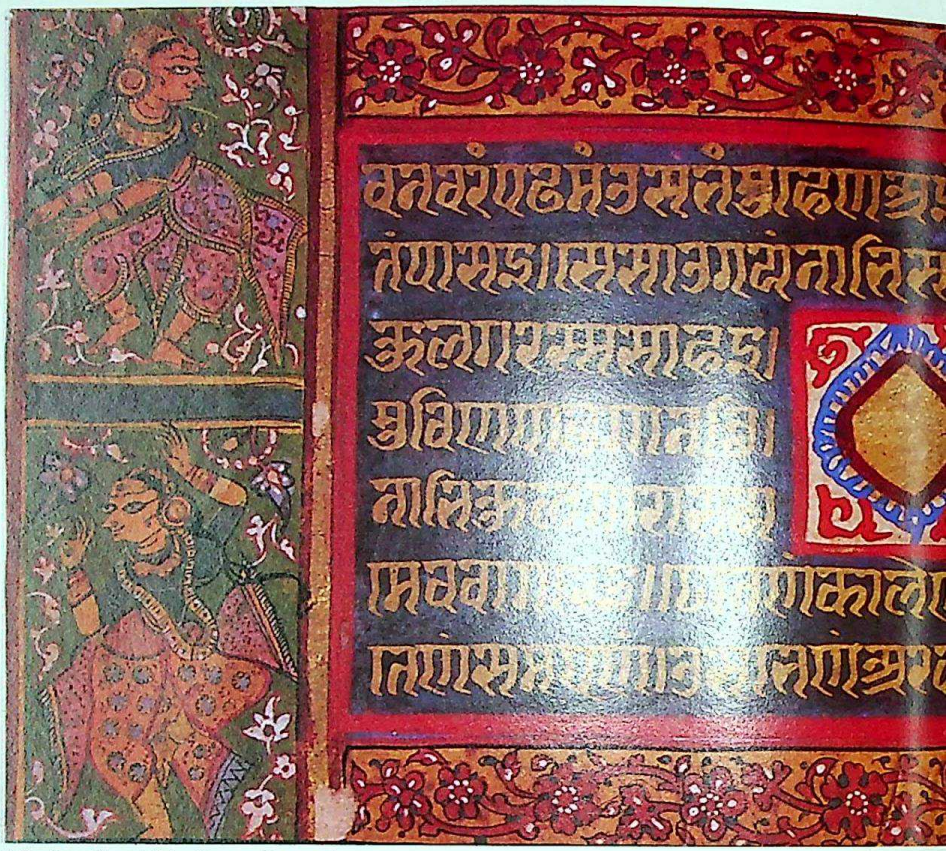

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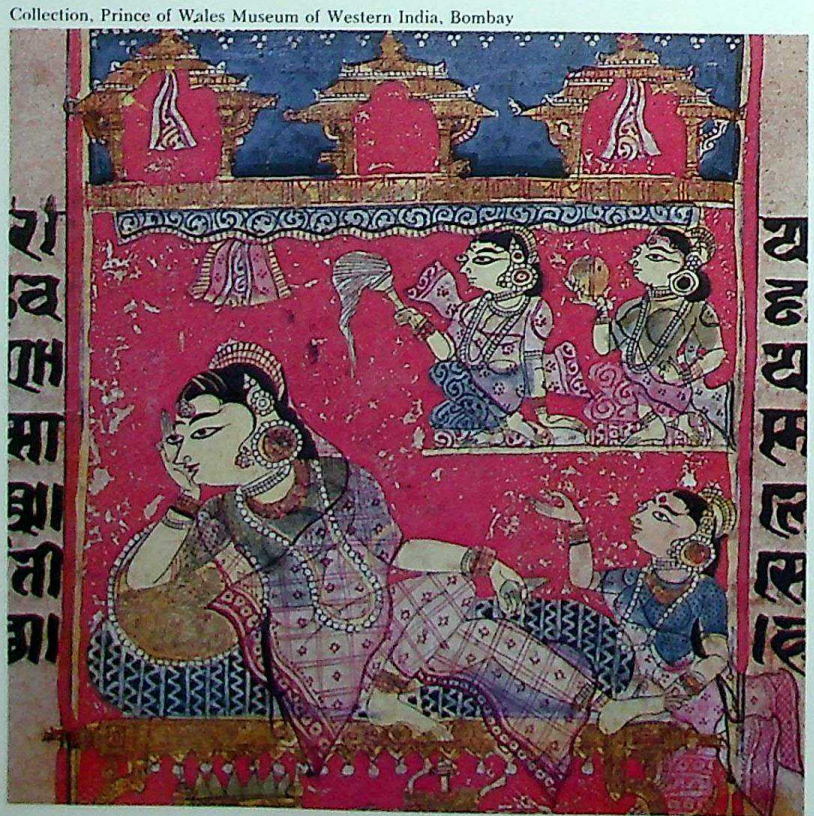

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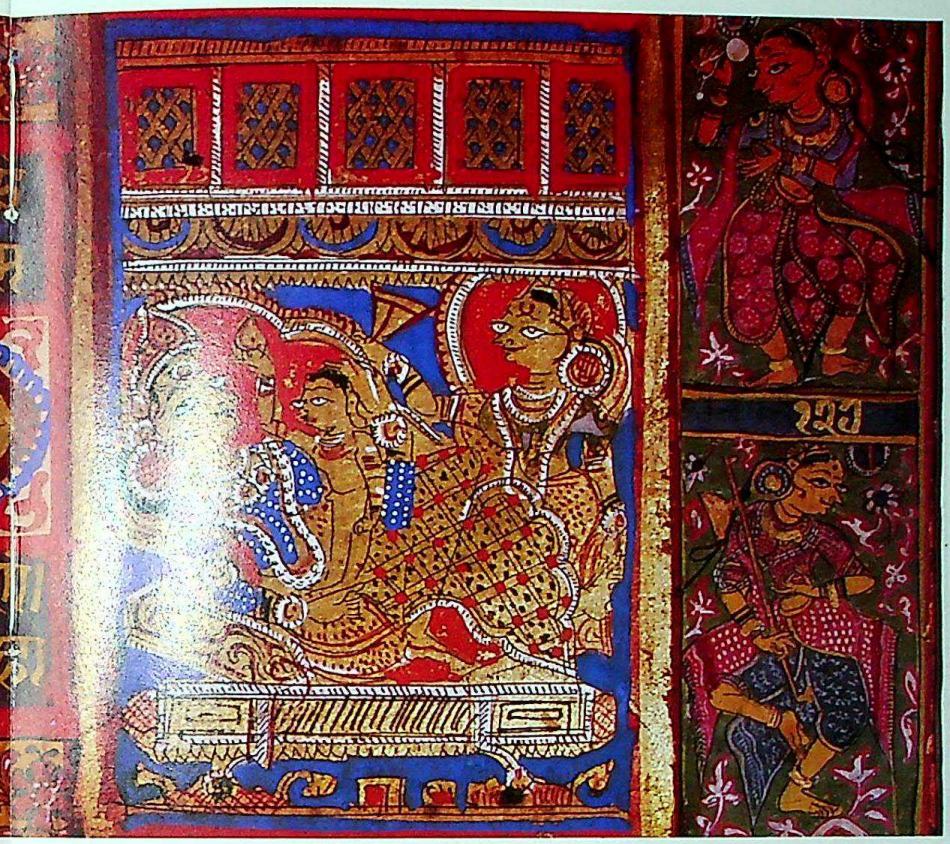

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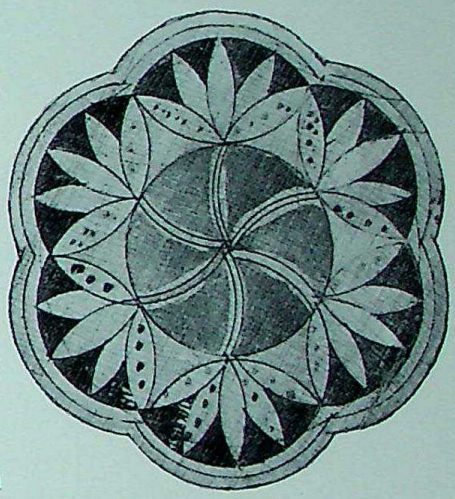

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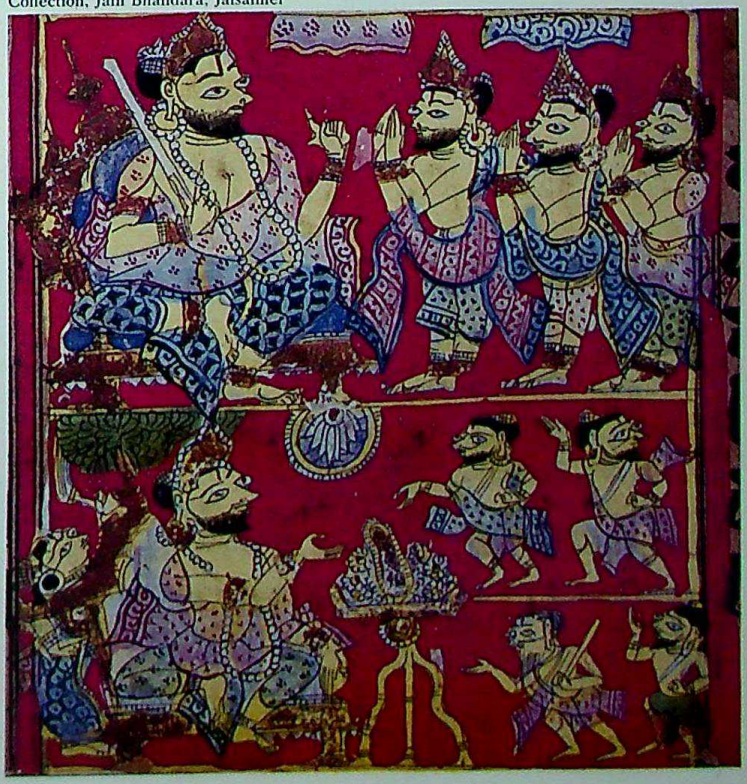

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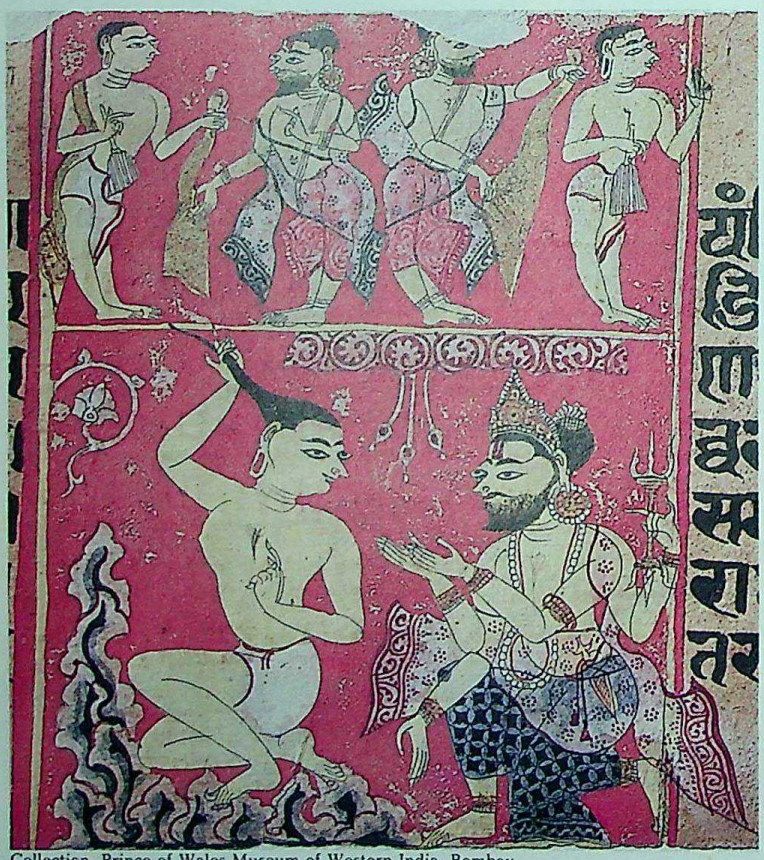

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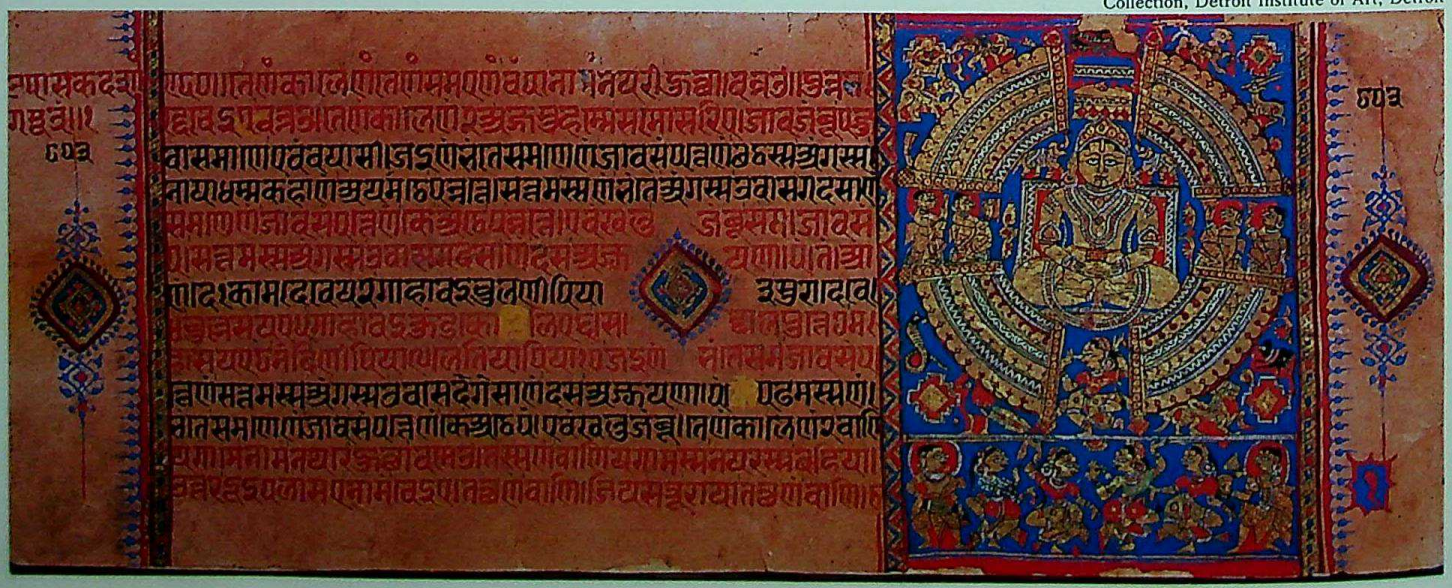

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prophesies of the soothsayers. Queen Trishala acknowledged the divinations with folded palms. || Fig. 9 ||

Ever since Mahavira had entered Trishala's womb, hosts of flying gods, under orders from Indra, carried Kubera's urns to distant and deserted places where ancient forgotten treasures were buried. They brought this wealth to the palace of Siddhartha. The family flourished in every way and therefore Mahavira's parents decided, "When he is born we shall name our son Vardhamana."

While in the womb, Mahavira lay extremely still out of compassion for his mother. But she grew alarmed, wondering if the embryo did not move because it had withered away. Dispirited and despondent, she sat brooding with her cheek resting on her hand and her eyes fixed on the ground. All joyous activities in the palace of Siddhartha ceased; all cheer drained away and the royal court succumbed to a spirit of dejection. || Fig. 10 ||

Mahavira sensed both his mother's anxiety and the reason for it, and stirred a little. Feeling the embryo's movement, Trishala was overcome with relief and exclaimed, "The child in my womb lives, it is safe." At that moment, while yet in the womb, Mahavira resolved that he would not renounce the life of a householder for that of a monk while his parents still lived.

Thereafter, Trishala offered prayers to the family deities, performed the rites of protection and ate nourishing food so that the child in her womb may be healthy in body and mind.

Birth:

Mahavira was born at midnight on the thirteenth day of the bright half of the month of Chaitra. Assisting at his birth were fifty-six *dikkakumaris.* On the night Mahavira was born, countless gods and goddesses glided up and down creating divine lustre everywhere, and hosts of flying gods showered silver, gold, jewels and ornaments, leaves, flowers and fruits,colours and powdered perfumes on King Siddhartha's palace.||Fig.11||

Indra came down to earth and after putting Trishala into a deep sleep, laid a 'false Mahavira' by her side. He took the newly born Mahavira and made himself five-fold: one self held the child, the second self held a parasol over Mahavira and the third and fourth selves stood nearby waving fly-whisks. The fifth self danced for the child, holding a thunderbolt. Indra and other heavenly beings then proceeded to Mount Meru and participated in the lustration rites. After the nativity celebrations Indra returned the holy infant to its mother. || Fig. 12 ||

At daybreak, King Siddhartha assembled his guards and instructed them to free all prisoners, abolish taxes, sweep the towns, sprinkle the streets and squares with water and scatter rice everywhere. Also, he asked them to decorate the town with flags and banners, ornamental gateways and garlands; mark doorways with palm-prints and let the smell of incense saturate the atmosphere; arrange for dancers, rope-walkers, jumping acrobats, jesters, story-tellers and ballad singers.

Thereafter King Siddhartha, his royal household and entourage celebrated the birth of Mahavira for eleven days with great pomp and splendour. On the first day the parents of Mahavira performed the *sthiti-pratijya* ceremony, on the third day they showed the child to the Sun and the Moon, on the sixth day they kept awake the whole night in a ritual vigil and finally on the eleventh day, the ceremonies of ritual purifications connected with child-birth came to a close. On the twelfth day King Siddhartha and Queen Trishala held a banquet to which they invited their friends, relatives and other eminent people. After performing auspicious rites the royal couple, along with their guests, partook of the feast. The King and Queen honoured their guests with gifts and flowers and informed them that "ever since our son was conceived, our honour, wealth, power and happiness have increased. We have therefore resolved to name him Vardhamana because the name is worthy of him and is appropriate to the qualities he has manifested." And thus the infant was called Vardhamana.

Mahavira grew up in the palace with other princes as his companions. During his boyhood Mahavira encountered and suppressed a jealous god who was determined to crush his courage. One day while Mahavira was at play with his companions, this god assumed the shape of a serpent and appeared near a tree where Mahavira was playing with his friends. All the boys fled in fright but Mahavira, unperturbed, lifted the snake and flung it away. The god then reappeared as a playmate of the boys. During one of the games the winner, Mahavira, rode the backs of the other boys. As he mounted the back of the god, the latter suddenly turned into a terrifying demon with hair "like a forest fire," eyes like burning coals and two pointed tusks. The demon kept increasing in size until Mahavira struck him on the back. That mighty blow reduced the god to the size of a dwarf. When he was vanquished the god paid homage to the greatness of Mahavira. || Fig. 13 ||

Mahavira belonged to the Kashyapa line and was known as Jnatraputra or Nataputta since he also belonged to the Jnatra clan. Though he was named Vardhamana by his parents, others called him Shramana because he was tranquil and blissful and the gods referred to him as Mahavira on account of his tremendous steadfastness in the face of hardships and dangers. Mahavira's father was known by three names: Siddhartha, Shreyamsa and Yashamsa. His mother was called Trishala, Videhadatta and Priyakarini. His elder brother was Nandivardhana; his sister, Sudarshana, and his wife, Yashoda. Mahavira's daughter had two names: Anavadya and Priyadarshana.

Mahavira was both handsome and intelligent, upright and modest. He spent thirty years of his life in the region of Videha

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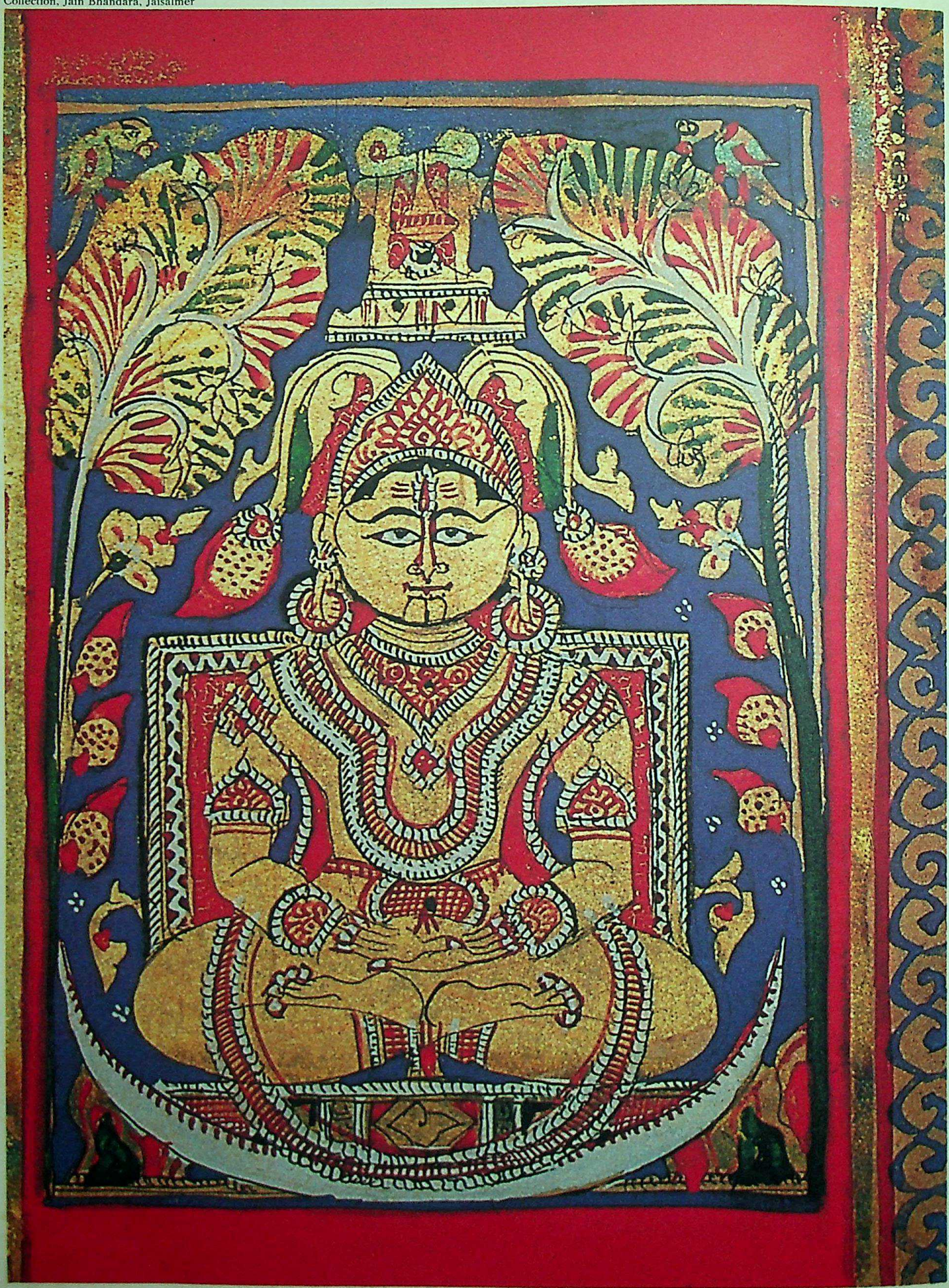

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and, after his parents had passed away, he sought and received permission from his elders to take the vows of an itinerant monk.

Renunciation:

Since Mahavira was in possession of unprecedented, unlimited and unimpaired knowledge from birth, he was able to perceive that the time had come for his renunciation rites. Preparatory to his renunciation, for a whole year, Mahavira gave away his gold, ornaments, carriages, warehouses, treasure-houses and all that was of value. At that time the *Laukantika* gods came and said, "Arhata, propagate the religion which is a blessing to all creatures in the world." || Fig. 14 ||

Indra also came down from the heavens, revered the future Jina and set him on a throne placed on a magic dias. He anointed, bathed and decorated Mahavira and then produced a palanquin called Chandraprabha for him to depart from the world of mundane activities. On the tenth day of the dark half of the month of Margashirsh, in winter, Mahavira left home in his renunciation palanquin. Accompanying him were gods and men; some were playing musical instruments, some blowing conches, others chanting auspicious verses and still others ringing bells. As he proceeded on his journey Mahavira was followed by reverent eyes, voices singing hymns of praise and adoring hearts. || Fig. 15 ||

The procession passed through the streets of Kundagrama to a park called Jnati-Sanda-Vana, and halted under an *ashoka* tree. Mahavira descended from his palanquin, shed his finery, ornaments and garlands and plucked out his hair in five handfuls. Indra received the hair in a diamond cup (which he cast later into the Ocean of Milk). Then putting on the divine robe given to him by Indra, Mahavira became a homeless mendicant wandering alone. At the time of Mahavira's renunciation, a Brahman named Soma approached him saying that he had not received any gift when Mahavira was distributing his wealth. Since Mahavira had nothing except the divine robe given to him by Indra, he tore it into half and gave one part to Soma keeping the other part for himself. When a weaver saw this cloth, he informed Soma that it was exquisite and that he should try and obtain the other half as well. So, Soma followed Mahavira and, a year and a month later, Soma's desire was fulfilled. For, as Mahavira passed a thorny bush, his robe got caught in it and it slipped away. Mahavira did not care to retrieve it and Soma was overjoyed with his acquisition. || Fig. 16 ||

For twelve years Mahavira cultivated the attitude of not caring for the body. He had lost his robe, was devoid of all belongings and used the hollow of his palms as a begging bowl. While wandering as a monk, Mahavira endured all adversities that came his way, caused by gods, men and beasts. Villagers set their dogs on him and beat him or tore his hair out. But he patiently endured all such insults and treatment. A jealous god, Samgamaka, troubled Mahavira for six months—first with ants, dust-storms, fire and weapons and then with attractive promises of heaven and beautiful women. But his efforts were in vain. One day, towards the end of his quest, Mahavira was in deep concentration while performing ascetic penance. A cowherd whose bulls had wandered away in the forest while he was busy milking the cows, saw Mahavira and asked him if he had seen the bulls. But Mahavira was too engrossed in meditation to reply. In spite of repeatedly questioning him the cowherd could not elicit any response. In fury he took two spikes and drove them into Mahavira's ears until they met inside his head. Then the cowherd cut off the protruding ends to prevent anyone from extracting them from Mahavira's ears. When Mahavira completed his meditation and went to the village to seek alms, a physician perceived his agony. With the help of a merchant the physician bathed Mahavira and had shampooers massage him to loosen his joints. The spikes fell out of Mahavira's head causing him tremendous pain. || Fig. 17 ||

Once, during his perigrinations, Mahavira was advised to avoid walking through a forest because a fierce serpent named Chandakaushika lived there. Mahavira, undeterred, entered the forest which was desolate with withered trees and dead leaves. While he sat in meditation, the serpent saw him and attacked him, but to no avail. Mahavira then spoke to the serpent and it immediately recalled its past births, repented its evil ways and went to heaven when it died.

Omniscience:

Finally, in the thirteenth year of his wanderings, Mahavira attained ultimate knowledge while meditating under a *shala* tree and became omniscient. The gods set about preparing a *samavasarana* as they did when any Jina obtained perfect knowledge. They cleaned a *yojana* of earth and perfumed and decorated it. Then they built an enclosure with an outer wall of silver, a middle one of gold and an innermost one of jewels. Each wall had four jewelled gates. In the centre the gods placed a throne for the Jina. From the *samavasarana* Mahavira, who could be seen from all four sides, preached to gods, men and animals. || Fig. 18 ||

Liberation:

Mahavira spent the last rainy season of his life in the scribe's hall of King Hastipala in the town of Pava. He died on the fifteenth night of the dark half of Kartika, and his soul, freed from the fetters of life, death and decay, attained perfection and was liberated. His spirit ascended to *siddhashila* which is the apex of the universe; it is made of pure white gold and is shaped like a crescent or an inverted parasol, thick at the middle but tapering off at the ends till it is as thin as a fly's wing. || Fig. 19 ||

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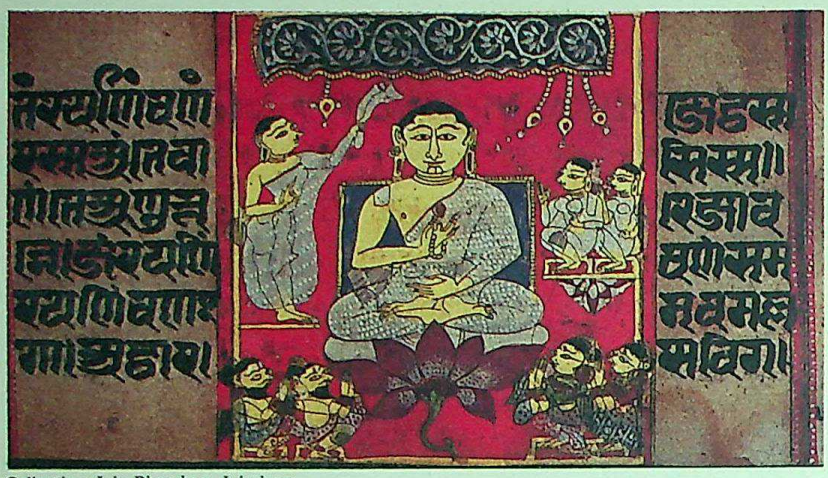

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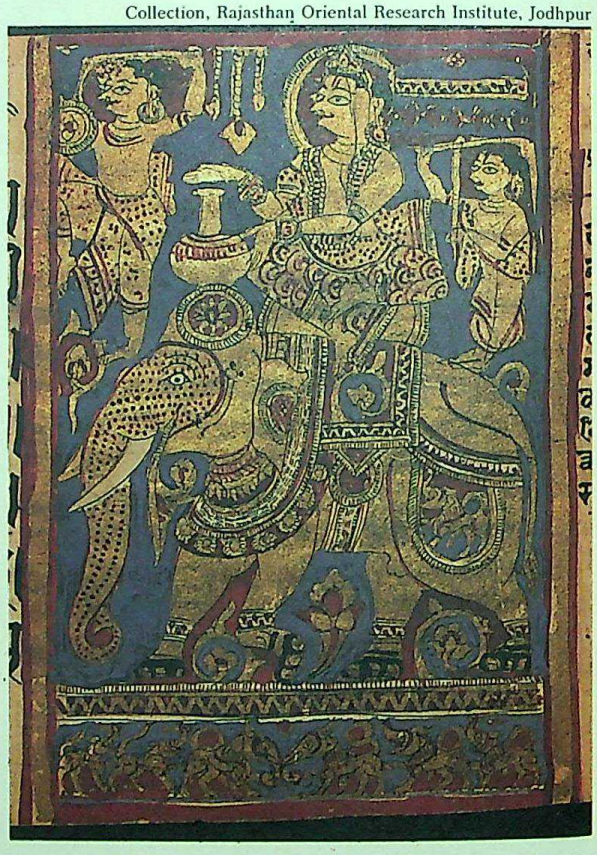

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On that night countless gods and goddesses celebrated Mahavira's liberation in ascending and descending movements causing divine lustre. On that moonless night, eighteen democratic princely chiefs of Kashi and Kaushala—nine Mallakas and nine Lichchhavis—ordered illuminations, exclaiming, "Since the light of the holy knowledge is gone let us make a material illumination!"

Mahavir left behind a following of 14,000 monks, 36,000 nuns, 59,000 laymen and 318,000 laywomen. || Fig. 20 ||

Life of Parshva

The five important events in the life of Tirthankara Parshva occurred when the moon was in conjunction with the constellation *vishakha.* On the fourth day of the dark half of the month of Chaitra, Parshva, after having spent twenty *sagaropamas* in a celestial abode called Pranata-Kalpa, descended on earth into the womb of Queen Vama, the consort of King Ashvasena who ruled Banaras. At the time of his conception he was in possession of three out of the five types of knowledge. On that night, Parshva's mother saw the fourteen auspicious dreams that come to the mother of every Tirthankara at the time of conception. She gave birth to Parshva at midnight on the tenth day of the dark half of the month of Pausha, and the world was filled with divine lustre caused by the ascending and descending undulations of the gods and goddesses. The infant received the name of Parshva because at the time of his conception his mother saw a snake crawling by her side.

Legends connected with Parshva in Jain mythology state that in one of his previous births, Parshva had a brother who was wicked and resentful because Parshva was virtuous. Both the brothers were reborn nine times, and in four of these births the wicked soul killed the noble one. In the tenth birth, the good soul was embodied in Prince Parshva while the villainous one, still in its ninth birth, was born as Kamatha, an ascetic. Once, Parshva came across Kamatha engaged in *panchagni tapas.* Through his transcendent knowledge Parshva perceived a family of snakes in one of the logs burning in the fire near Kamatha and freed them. Kamatha was angered and humiliated by this action. || Fig. 21 ||

After his death Kamatha was reborn as *asura* Meghmalin, and in revenge he unleashed a mighty storm on Parshva who was meditating and performing austerities at the time. The snake that Parshva had rescued during Kamatha's five-fire penance had been reborn as Dharana, Lord of the Nagas, and this snake now came to Parshva's rescue. He spread his seven hoods over Parshva to protect him from the deluge caused by Meghmalin. Ultimately the *asura* repented of his evil actions, and adopted an upright path. || Fig. 22 ||

Accomplished and intelligent, Parshva developed a modest self-restrained character. He spent thirty years of his life as a householder. Then he renounced all his possessions. On the eleventh day of the dark half of the month of Pausha, Parshva stepped into his renunciation palanquin Vishala and passed through the town in a procession, to a park known as Ashramapada. There, under an *ashoka* tree, he stepped down from the palanquin, shed all his finery and plucked out his hair in five handfuls. He became a monk with only a single piece of holy cloth on his person and wandered in the company of 300 other mendicants.

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For eighty-three days Parshva practised austerities, mortifying his body and enduring all the hardships that befell him. On the eighty-fourth day, the fourth day of the dark half of the month of Chaitra, he attained omniscience. At the age of a hundred years, Parshva breathed his last at forenoon on the eighth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Shravana, atop the summit of Mount Sammeta, and attained *moksha.* He was, at the time, meditating in a posture with uplifted hands. At the time of his death Parshva's congregation consisted of 16,000 monks, 38,000 nuns, 64,000 laymen and 327,000 laywomen.

Life of Arishtanemi

The five important events in the life of Arishtanemi, also known as Nemi, occurred when the moon was in conjunction with the constellation *chitra.* Arishtanemi descended to earth after spending thirty-three *sagaropamas* in a celestial abode called Aparajita. He was conceived in the womb of Queen Shiva, the wife of King Samudravijaya who was the chieftain of the city of Sauripura in Gujarat. At the time of his conception his mother envisioned the same fourteen lucky dreams that came to all mothers of Tirthankaras. At birth he received the name Arishtanemi because his mother had seen a *nemi* made of *rishta* jewels at the time of his conception.

Arishtanemi is considered to be a cousin of the Hindu god, Krishna. The latter felt threatened by the tremendous strength of young Nemi since he had been the only one to successfully bend Krishna's bow and blow his conch. Krishna challenged his cousin to a test of physical strength but failed to bend down Nemi's extended arm.

Krishna and his wives urged Nemi to marry in the hope that sexual pursuits would occupy and weaken him. But Nemi was more inclined towards disassociating himself from women and devoting himself to the pursuits of spiritual perfection. He was, nevertheless, persuaded to marry when Krishna brought to his attention the fact that all previous Tirthankaras had been householders. Accordingly, his marriage was fixed with Rajamati, the daughter of King Ugrasena. While on his way to the marriage pavilion Nemi heard the piteous cries of animals that were to be slain for the wedding banquet. Upon hearing the cries, Nemi was filled with revulsion for the world and he decided, there and then, to abandon the world and became a homeless monk. He turned away. || Fig. 23 ||

Nemi gifted away all his possessions and stepped into his renunciation palanquin, Uttarakura. The procession bearing Nemi's palanquin wound its way through the town of Sauripura, and came to a halt outside it in a park called Revataka. Nemi alighted from his litter and, under a large *ashoka* tree, he shed his finery and ornaments and, plucking his hair in five handfuls, became a homeless mendicant along with a thousand others.

At the end of fifty-four days of practicing austerities, he attained omniscience. He had a following of 18,000 monks, 44,000 nuns, 169,000 laymen and 336,000 laywomen.

Arishtanemi spent the first three hundred years of his life on earth as a bachelor, fifty-four days as a monk, and slightly less than seven hundred years as an omniscient being—one thousand years in all. On the completion of his life-span he passed away on the summit of Mount Girnar in Gujarat. He was, at that time, in the company of 536 monks.

Other Tirthankaras

The predecessors of the twenty-second Tirthankara, Nemi, were in the following order: Nami, Munisuvrata, Malli, Ara, Kunthu, Shanti, Dharma, Ananta, Vimala, Vasupujya, Shreyansa, Shitala, Suvihita, Chandraprabha, Suparshva, Padmaprabha, Sumati, Abhinanda, Sambhava, Ajita and Rishabha.

Life of Rishabha

Rishabha was the very first Tirthankara, and his life, like the lives of others who followed him, was marked by five auspicious events. Four of these occurred when the moon was in conjunction with the constellation *uttarshadha,* while the fifth and last occurred when the moon was in conjunction with the constellation *abhijit.*

After thirty-three *sagaropamas,* Rishabha descended on earth from a celestial sphere called Sarvarthasiddha and was conceived in the womb of Marudevi, the wife of Patriarch Nabhi in the land of Ikshavaku. At that time Rishabha was the master of three types of knowledge. When he was conceived his mother witnessed the fourteen lucky dreams. Nabhi himself interpreted these dreams as, in those days, there were no dream diviners. The order in which Marudevi's fourteen dreams appeared differed slightly from the usual; the second dream, that of a bull, appeared first and for this reason the child was named Rishabha. Rishabha was born in Chaitra, the first month of the summer season.

Rishabha lived as a prince for two million *purva* years and ruled as a king for six million and three thousand *purva* years. During this period he taught his subjects the seventy-two arts of which mathematics took primary importance. The list of the other arts begins with that of writing and ends with the art of understanding bird-calls. He also expounded sixty-four 'womanly' accomplishments, a hundred crafts and three professions.

Prior to Rishabha's birth on earth people were used to eating their food raw but as the conditions on earth deteriorated,

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so did their health and they began to suffer from indigestion. Rishabha made the first cooking-pot by moulding clay on the *kumbha* located on each side of an elephant's forehead. He taught his citizens the use of clay utensils. || Fig. 24 ||

Until the time of Rishabha there was no institution of marriage. People were born as twins—one male and one female—and destined to live together and have children. But one day, in the steadily deteriorating times, a male child died accidentally. The female was left alone and the Patriarch Nabhi said, "Let her be the lawful wife of Rishabha." At that time the gods came down and prepared a wonderful matrimonial pavilion and Rishabha was married to his own twin, as well as to the girl whose mate had died. Thus was instituted marriage and the ceremonies then observed set the pattern for weddings in the future. || Fig. 25 ||

After dividing his kingdom among his hundred sons, Rishabha distributed his wealth in the form of gifts. Then, in his renunciation palanquin named Sudarshana, he journeyed through the city of Ayodhya and arrived at the park known as Siddharthavana. He alighted from the palanquin and under a great *ashoka* tree he shed his clothes and ornaments and plucked out his hair in four instead of five handfuls. Thus, he became a holy monk and donned a holy robe. With him were 4,000 other men who also entered the order of mendicant monks.

Rishabha practised austerities for a thousand years before he attained omniscience. His congregation consisted of 84,000 monks, 300,000 nuns, 350,000 laymen and 554,000 laywomen. He dwelt as an omniscient being for a hundred thousand *purva* years minus the thousand years spent in austerities. In other words, he lived as a monk for a full 100,000 *purva* years. He attained liberation while seated cross-legged under a banyan tree, on Mount Ashtapada.

Sthaviravali

The second segment of the *Kalpa-Sutra*—the *Sthaviravali*—lists the genealogy of important teachers of the Jain faith. It starts with the eleven disciples of Mahavira—the *ganadharas*.

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Four of these disciples combined into pairs and so only nine *ganas* were formed. All *ganadharas* were proficient in the twelve *anga* and the fourteen *purva* treatises, and they were versed in the complete doctrine of the *ganins.*

Only one out of the nine *ganas,* initiated by Arya Sudharma, continued the Jain tradition. Arya Sudharma was followed by Jambu, Prabhava, Sayyambhava and by Yashobhadra. Yashobhadra's successors were Sambhuvijaya and Bhadrabahu. The latter is reputed to have written at least the *Jina Charita* portion of the *Kalpa-Sutra.* The former, Sambhuvijaya, had a disciple named Sthulabhadra. Before Sthulabhadra became a monk, he had lived with a courtesan named Kosha but after being ordained he shunned her seductions. Kosha was given to a charioteer who, in order to win her affections, tried to impress her with his skill at archery. He pierced some mangoes with an arrow and then kept shooting an arrow into the end of the previous one till he could obtain the fruits without moving from his place. Kosha then exhibited her prowess as a dancer. She placed a needle in a heap of mustard seeds and covered it with flower petals. She danced on the seeds without scattering them or hurting herself on the needle. The charioteer was converted to the Jain faith when Kosha explained how her performance was worthless in comparision to the achievements of Sthulabhadra. Kosha eventually became a Jain nun. || Fig. 26 ||

While Bhadrabahu was in Nepal during the great famine in Bihar, the *sangha* sent 500 monks to him to recover the *Dhristhivada* section of the Jain canon. Sthulabhadra, who led the group, was able to learn ten of the fourteen *purvas* of the *Dhristhivada.*

The genealogical charts record names of teachers after Yashobhadra until Vajra and his followers. While still an infant, Vajra heard that his father Dhanagiri had become a monk. Vajra wanted to follow the path his father had chosen and decided to misbehave until he was allowed to do so. Around that time Dhanagiri, now a monk, visited his family. His former wife offered him their son, Vajra. Dhanagiri accepted the child and entrusted him to his guru. Vajra was sent to live with the nuns and, in the company of holy people, he became very well-behaved. Seeing the change in her son's behaviour, Vajra's mother attempted to regain custody by tempting him with toys. But Vajra refused to return to her. Instead he took up a broom that his father proffered as a symbolic gesture that he preferred to become a monk.

Another list of teachers records names that followed Yashobhadra until Phalgumitra. This lists the main disciples of each teacher as well as the *shakhas* started by them.

The genealogy section closes with a passage venerating many teachers, from Phalgumitra to the last teacher Devarddhi Kshamashramana who is reputed to have codified the Jain canon in the town of Vallabhi in Gujarat.

Sadhu Samachari

The last part of the *Kalpa-Sutra* contains 68 *sutras.* These state the rules of conduct to be observed by the ordained during the four months of the rain-rest. The rules concern issues of food, shelter, deportment and travel, and deal with these in a thorough and detailed manner. For example, one rule prohibits monks and nuns from eating any foodstuff if their bodies are moist. Another allows them to take shelter in a house, grove, open hall or under a tree if it rains while they are seeking alms. But, they must be very particular about whether they should eat, and about what they eat, when it rains. Some dictates on deportment mention that monks must not use harsh language, and that they should be forgiving and tranquil. A rule on travel limits the area of movement for the ordained to five *kosas* all around.

Exceptions to the rules are provided for in cases of contingency. The *Sadhu Samachari* concludes by acclaiming the virtue of forgiveness and urges the ordained to work unwaveringly towards spiritual fulfillment.

The *Kalpa-Sutra* ends with this section on *Sadhu Samachari.*

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Kalakacharya-Katha

The Shvetambara Jains believe that, in the year A.D. 466, the concluding date of the *Paryushana* Festival was preponed from the fifth to the fourth day of the bright half of the month of Bhadrapada. According to the events narrated in the *Kalakacharya-Katha*, Monk Kalaka was the pontiff under whose authority the change took place. The *Kalakacharya-Katha* (the Shvetambara legend of Monk Kalaka) thus became closely associated with the *Paryushana* Festival and with the *Kalpa-Sutra* text which is read or recited during that period. The *Kalakacharya-Katha* is often appended to the *Kalpa-Sutra* and is generally treated as an integral part of the larger work; it is considered to be the ninth lecture of the *Kalpa-Sutra.*

The *Kalakacharya-Katha* occurs in the non-canonical section of Jain literature. The numerous versions of the legend appear in Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhramsha, Old Gujarati and Old Marwari. Recounted by different authors, the narrations vary in length and style. Yet, apart from minor textual variations or elaborations, the several compositions possess remarkable conformity in theme and format.

The tale unfolds in four stages. The first of these describes Kalaka's initiation under Monk Gunakara, the fall of Gardabhilla (the wicked king of Ujjaini) and the arrival of the Sahi chieftains. The second part relates the events at the court of King Balamitra and Prince Bhanumitra as well as the alteration in the date of the end of the *Paryushana* Festival. The third part portrays Monk Kalaka reproving his arrogant spiritual grandson, Sagarchandra. In the fourth and final episode, the monk expounds the *Nigoda* doctrine to Shakra, the king of the gods.

It is difficult to determine the precise date at which the *Kalakacharya-Katha* came into existence. Although transcriptions of it are available from A.D. 1250 onwards, the story, in all likelihood, was conceived much earlier. A comparative study of the various renditions of the *Kalakacharya-Katha* indicates that there was no single source of origin. Rather, the legend appears to have been culled from a non-generic mass of oral as well as written literature. Certain incidents, such as the tale of a city protected by the magic powers of the She-Ass, find parallels in Buddhist and Brahmanical literature.

Interestingly, the tale is not restricted to events in the life of an individual but seems to be a collage of miscellaneous anecdotes clustered around the name "Kalaka" in Shvetambara religious lore. Indeed, if examined on the basis of chronological and historical references, there can be little doubt that the episodes pertaining to this legend concern three distinct personages – all named Kalaka but separated from one another by considerable intervals of time. This confusion of character is really not surprising since the name Kalaka occurs several times in genealogies of the Shvetambara ecclesiastical order. Over centuries of narration, some of these different Kalakas appear to have merged and become consolidated into one mythical figure.

The first of the three distinct personages was apparently the disciple and successor of Monk Gunasundara who may be identified with Monk Gunakara of the Kalaka cycle. According to some scholars this Kalaka lived in the third century B.C. and is believed to have expounded the *Nigoda* doctrine to Shakra. Most authorities have come to the consensus that the second Kalaka was the brother of the nun, Sarasvati, who, with the aid of the Sahi kings, vanquished the evil tyrant, King Gardabhilla, in the first century B.C. The third Kalaka, from all known evidence, is supposedly the person responsible for the change in the date of the conclusion of the *Paryushana* Festival in the fifth century A.D. These three Kalakas can be associated with the first, second and last episodes in the legend. However, evidence that can convincingly link the third episode – the reproof of Kalaka's spiritual grandson – with any Kalaka

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figure reported in the genealogies of the Shvetambara Jain monks, is lacking.

During the thirteenth century, there arose a custom whereby the *Kalpa-Sutra* and the *Kalakacharya-Katha* were transcribed as a hyphenated text. In the period A.D. 1250-1550, a large number of these transcriptions were embellished with illustrations, many of which are preserved in the temple-repositories of the Shvetambara Jains.

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1

The Text

There was on this earth, in the land known as Bharatavarsha, a city called Dharavasa. In it dwelt the brave and powerful king, Vajrasimha and his queen, Surasundari. Their son, Prince Kalaka, was trained in all the accomplishments befitting his position. || Fig. 4 ||

Once, when Prince Kalaka was out riding his horse, he heard a sweet and sonorous sound emanating from a mango grove. His curiosity aroused, the prince went in search of its source and was drawn to the place where Monk Gunakara was preaching Jain philosophy. The prince, after kneeling respectfully, joined the audience. || Fig. 2 ||

The monk's sermon inspired a deep longing for spiritual peace in the prince. He approached Monk Gunakara who then explained to him the complex observances of the Jain monastic community. On his return to the palace, Prince Kalaka expressed the desire to be initiated into the Jain monastic order. With great distress and reluctance, King Vajrasimha and Queen Surasundari granted him permission to take up the vows of the ordained. Monk Kalaka showed great perseverance and acquired spiritual perfection. In course of time, he succeeded his master, Monk Gunakara, as the head of the group of monks.

Several years later, Monk Kalaka, surrounded by a retinue of 500 monks and nuns, arrived in the city of Ujjaini and set up camp in a park. Among the nuns in the group was Sarasvati, the younger sister of *Suri* Kalaka. One day, Gardabhilla, the king of Ujjaini, saw Sarasvati and was smitten by her beauty. He ordered his men to escort her to his harem. The nun cried out for help from her brother while being forcibly abducted by the soldiers. || Fig. 5 ||

When Monk Kalaka learnt of his sister's plight, he pleaded with the king saying, "Great King, the rules must be diligently preserved by those who hold the rule; when those who hold the rule are unsteady, then the rules fall." But Kalaka's words of persuasion had not the slightest effect on the ruthless king for he was infatuated with lust. The monk, overcome with anger, vowed to uproot King Gardabhilla from his throne for humiliating the pious and casting contempt upon the religious order. The monk felt impelled to resort to drastic measures in order to protect the Jain faith.

Motivated by this resolve, Kalaka devoted his attention to the study of the king's source of power. He learned that Gardabhilla derived his strength from the mighty magic of the She-Ass and could be defeated only with great ingenuity and wit. After pondering awhile, Kalaka planned a course of action: attired in a madman's garb, he wandered about at cross-roads and market places, raving incoherently. The townsfolk, shocked to see the monk in this condition, spoke unhappily saying, "Alas, the king has not acted well, and in consequence Monk Kalaka has left the sect and wanders about demented." When the king's ministers heard such harsh censure of their master, they advised him to set the nun free. But their words were of no avail and the king retaliated with insults that silenced them.

Monk Kalaka received information of the king's intractable attitude and departed from the city. He travelled northwards until he reached the region of Sagakula, on the western bank of the River Indus, where the nobles were known as Sahis and their overlord as Sahanusahi (Shahenshah). In this region, Kalaka came upon a group of boys standing beside a well and weeping; their ball had fallen into the well and they did not

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know how to retrieve it. Kalaka, an expert bowman, called for a bow and arrows. He shot an arrow into the ball, then he pierced the first arrow with a second, the second with a third—until a chain was formed. The ball was thus drawn out of the well and the boys were happy. One of the boys was the son of the local Sahi and he reported this incident to his father. The Sahi was impressed by Kalaka's ability and invited him to be his guest. ‖ Figs. 3, 6 ‖

One day, the Sahi was conversing with Kalaka when the door-keeper appeared and announced a messenger from the Sahanusahi. The Sahi welcomed the royal envoy who entered bearing a gift from the overlord. When the Sahi saw the gift, he paled. As soon as the royal emissary left the room, the monk, perplexed by his friend's reaction, took the opportunity to remark, "You appear frightened by the Sahanusahi's gesture."

The Sahi explained, "This is not a sign of favour but one of anger. The king has sent a sword with my name stamped on it and I must kill myself with it." The monk inquired whether the king was angry with him alone and in reply the Sahi said that at least ninety-five other Sahis shared the same fate as he, since the number 96 was stamped on the sword. The monk advised the Sahi not to kill himself but to ally himself with the ninety-five other Sahis.

The Sahi summoned the royal envoy and obtained from him the names of the ninety-five other noblemen who had received similar orders. Dismissing the royal messenger, the Sahi then instructed his own men to go to the ninety-five Sahis and request them not to commit suicide but to come and join him. Since the other Sahis also wished to preserve their lives, they collected their paraphernalia and came. When all had assembled, the Sahi asked Kalaka what course of action they should follow. The monk advised them to cross the River Indus with troops and proceed southwards. Accordingly, the Sahis, accompanied by Kalaka set out in boats and journeyed upto the region of Surashtra. The rainy season had just set in and, because the roads were impassable during the monsoon, the Sahis divided the realm of Surashtra into ninety-six parts and camped there.

In autumn, Kalaka, eager to fulfill his original mission, urged the Sahis to conquer Ujjaini and occupy the prosperous region of Malwa. They were ready to do so except that they had no funds with which to purchase supplies, and, in the barren land of Surashtra, there was hardly enough to eat. Upon learning this, the *suri* sprinkled a potter's kiln of bricks with magical powder and transformed them into gold. He offered the gold to the Sahis for obtaining supplies. ‖ Fig. 7 ‖

The Sahis, now properly equipped, marched towards Ujjaini. When Gardabhilla received word of the approaching enemy, he rode out with his troops to the border of his realm. There, the two armies clashed. Gardabhilla's men were rapidly overpowered by the Sahi soldiers and were forced to

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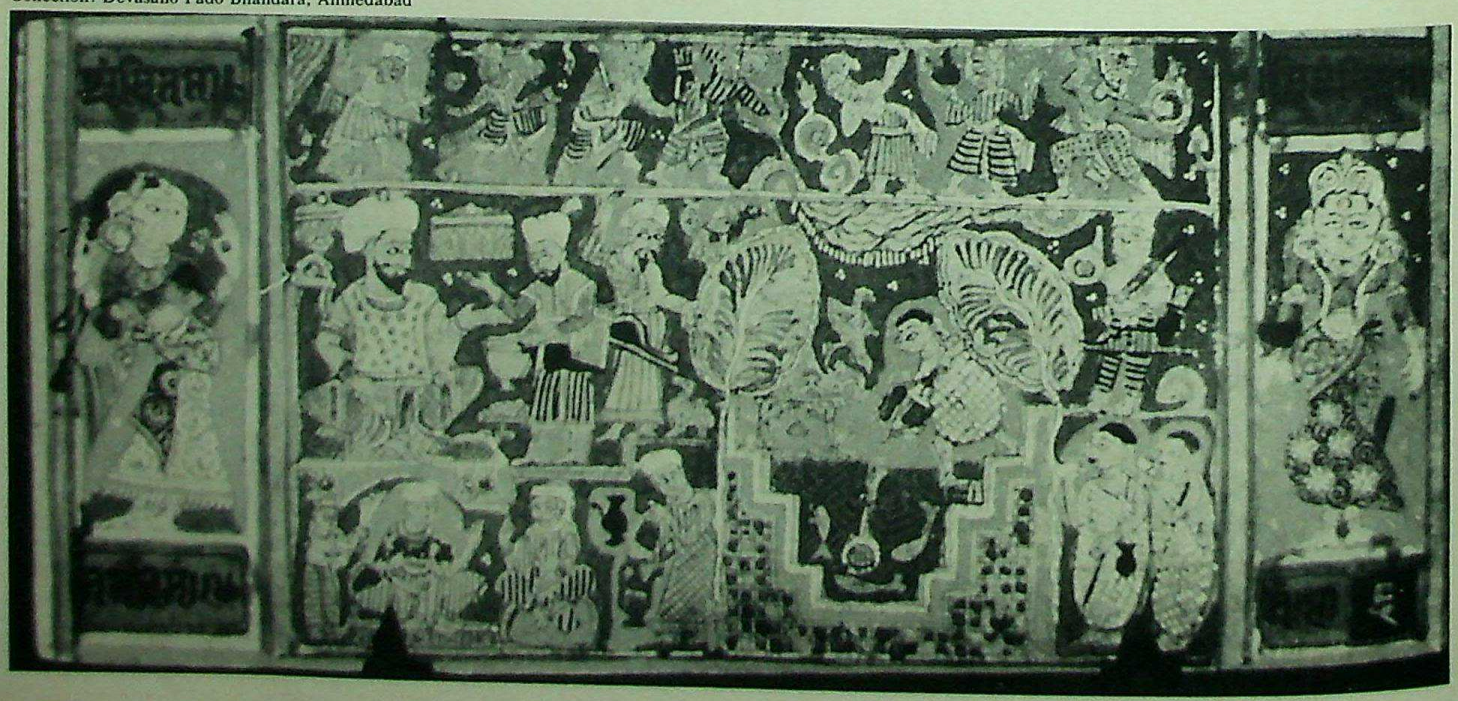

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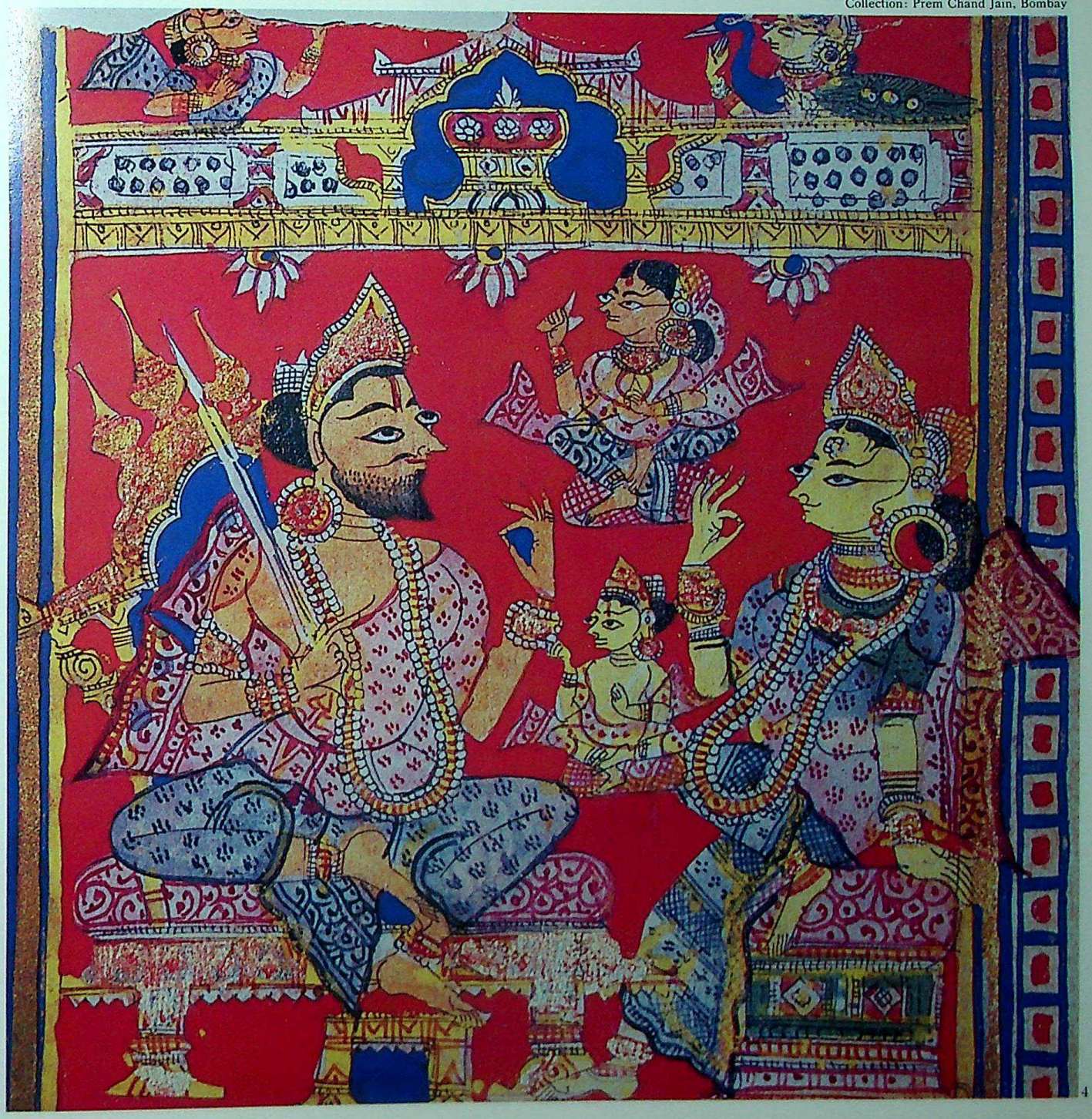

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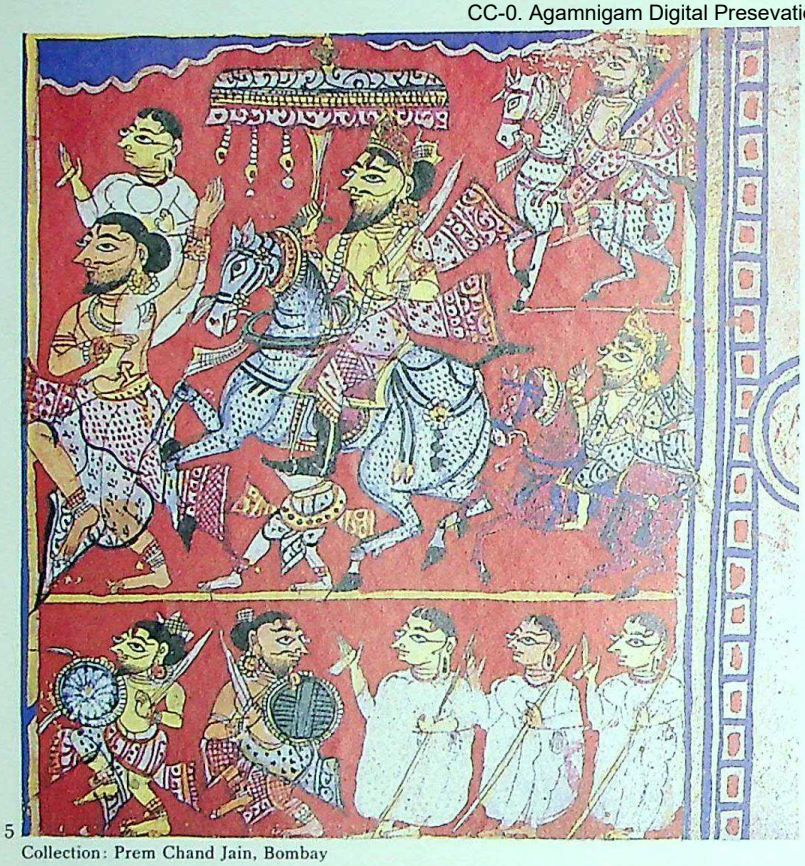

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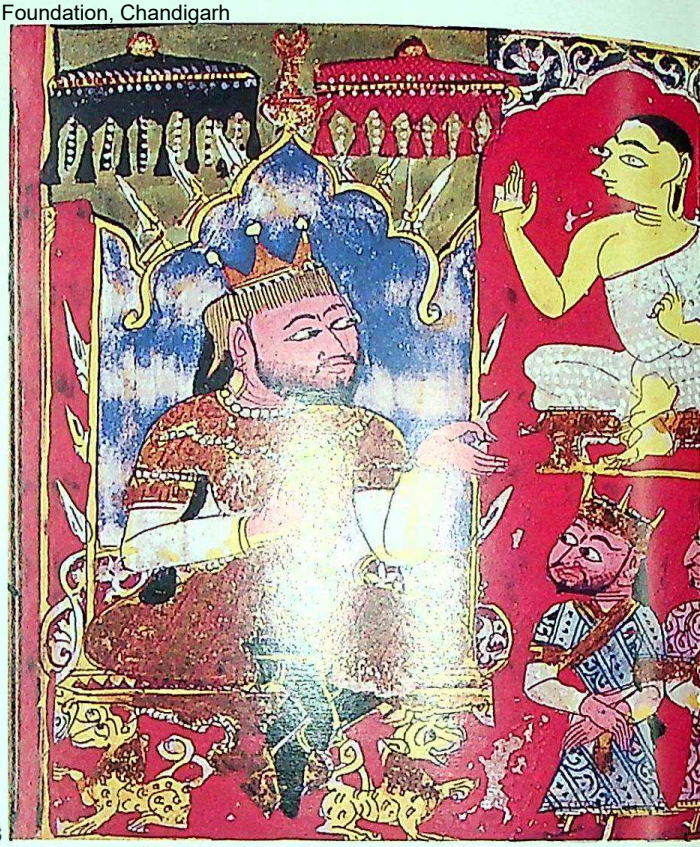

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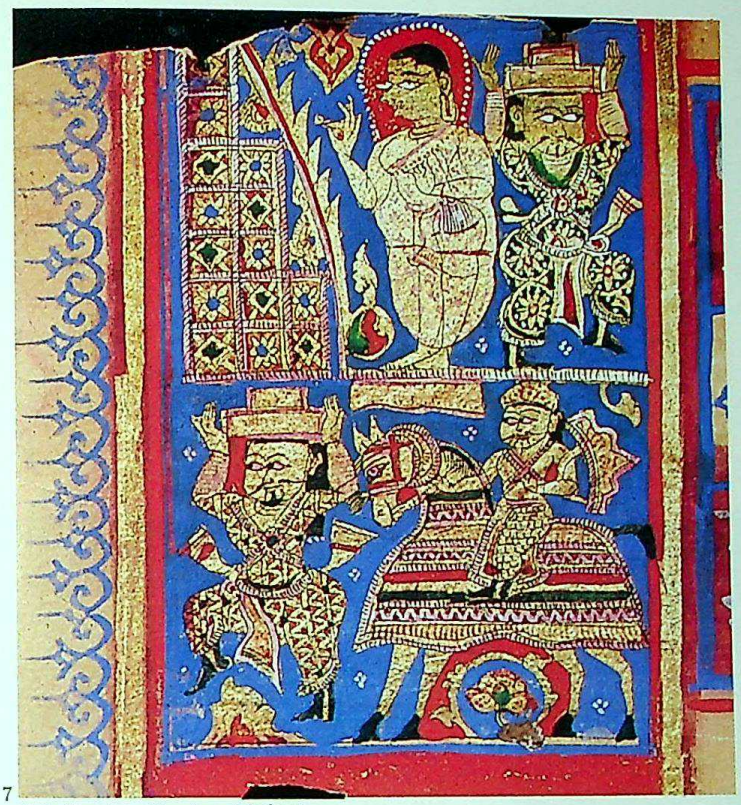

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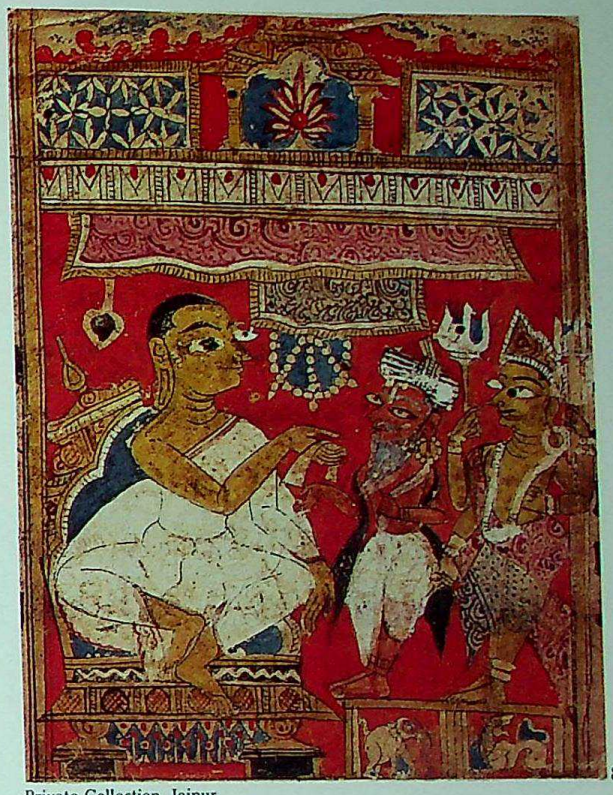

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retreat. Gardabhilla hastily returned to his capital to prepare for a siege. The enemy followed and encircled the city, systematically shutting off all points of access.

One day, the Sahi soldiers noticed that the citadel seemed deserted and they enquired of Kalaka the reason for this strange phenomenon. Kalaka remarked that since it was the eighth day of the fortnight, Gardabhilla, after observing a fast, would magically conjure up the She-Ass. He then asked the troops to scan the city towers for the appearance of the She-Ass. The Sahis soon spied the beast and pointed it out to the *suri.* Kalaka warned, "At the conclusion of Gardabhilla's spell, the She-Ass will bray and upon hearing it all men and animals belonging to the enemy will fall to the ground vomiting blood." To ward off these magical powers of the She-Ass, he ordered all except 108 excellent archers to withdraw to a distance of two leagues from the city. He instructed the marksmen to stand in readiness, with the strings of their bows drawn to their ears, aiming the arrows at the mouth of the evil beast—it was imperative that they fill the mouth with arrows before any sound escaped from it. The archers fulfilled their orders and the king's plot was foiled. || Fig. 10 ||

The stricken animal, its mouth severely injured, urinated and defecated on Gardabhilla. Then, in fury and pain, it kicked him and abandoned the city. The monk directed the soldiers to take Gardabhilla as prisoner for the king had lost his strength. The soldiers breached the city walls, captured Gardabhilla, bound him and brought him to the monk. || Fig. 11 ||

Kalaka admonished the wicked king for his evil deeds—for abducting a nun and for failing to show respect to the Jain monastic order. The monk then approached Gardabhilla with compassion, asking him to confess his faults and expiate his sins through austerities. But the latter's mind was already clouded with evil *karma* and he was unable to benefit from the opportunity offered to him. Kalaka realised that Gardabhilla's soul was deeply afflicted with *karma* and sent him into exile. The Sahis drove Gardabhilla out of the country and he roamed free, yet wretched.

Kalaka re-established his sister, the nun Sarasvati, in the religious order. He himself performed penance to atone for the sins he had committed in the attempt to protect the faith, and assumed the leadership of the sect.

The soldiers accepted as their overlord the Sahi who had brought them to this land and settled down as his vassals in the region of Malwa. Because they were natives of Sagukula, known also as the Shaka bank of the Indus, they came to be known as Shakas and thus there arose the dynasty of the Shaka kings. A king named Vikramaditya later defeated the Shaka kings and assumed the throne of Malwa. With his reign began the Vikrama Era (57 B.C.). After 135 years had elapsed, King Vikramaditya's dynasty was overthrown by a Shaka king who re-established the Shaka rule; with him started the Shaka Era (A.D. 78). Till today, people in India continue to use both these eras as a basis for establishing and computing dates.

Change of the Date of *Paryushana*

In the city of Bhrigukachchha (Broach) lived the nephews and niece of Monk Kalaka: King Balamitra, Prince Bhanumitra, Princess Bhanushri and her son, Balabhanu.

Balamitra and Bhanumitra sent their high-priest to Ujjaini to invite their uncle to Bhrigukachchha to preach to the people. Kalaka accepted the invitation, arrived with his followers and was received with great pomp and ceremony. The impact of Kalaka's sermons filled Balabhanu with a desire to assume the holy vows. The people of the city also became devout followers of the Jain religion. When the royal chaplain, Gangadhara, noticed the fervent reaction of the populace to the teachings of the Tirthankaras, he attempted to establish the superiority of the Vedic tradition but was promptly silenced by Kalaka's arguments. The Brahman, disturbed at the rising popularity of Kalaka, plotted to force him out of the city.

One day, Gangadhara slyly remarked to the king that by walking on the same ground as the great ascetic, Kalaka, the king and his subjects were incurring the sin of disrespect which would cause an evil fate to befall them. The gullible king was convinced of the danger and asked how to remedy the situation. The crafty Brahman recommended that they induce the monk and his disciples to leave the city of their own accord. The manner in which this could be accomplished, he said, would be to offer improper food and drink as alms to the Jain ascetics. The king agreed to this proposal. The chaplain then proceeded to purposely misguide the city folk regarding the proper alms to be offered to the holy men and women. Monk Kalaka immediately deduced his nephew's intention and, without even waiting to observe the *Paryushana* season, departed from the city accompanied by his congregation.

Monk Kalaka and his disciples arrived at the city of Pratishthana (Paithan) in the land of Maharashtra. King Shalivahana, the ruler, was overjoyed. He came with his entourage to welcome the holy group and treated them with great honour and reverence. Kalaka and his followers were then established in proper quarters and devotees came to pay obeisance to them.

Traditionally, on the fifth day of the bright half of the month of Bhadrapada, the Festival of Indra was celebrated in Maharashtra. This festival coincided with that of *Paryushana.* Worried that the two celebrations would conflict with one another, the king approached *Suri* Kalaka saying, "On the day *Paryushana* falls, there will be a procession of Indra in

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accordance with the customs of the land. The people will not observe it without my presence. On that day, therefore, I will not be able to lustrate and worship the Jina images, so please be so kind as to celebrate the *Paryushana* Festival on the next day."

Monk Kalaka said that a postponement of the event would not be possible, "for the scriptures say that Mahavira observed the *Paryushana* when a month and twenty days of the rainy season had passed. Since then his *ganadharas,* their disciples and our preceptors have observed it thus. We must also do so. *Paryushana* may not come later than the night of the fifth."

After due thought and consideration, King Shalivahana offered an alternate suggestion saying, "If that is so, then perhaps we may observe *Paryushana* on the fourth." Monk Kalaka could find no fault with the logic of this proposal and decreed, "So be it!" Thus, in accordance with the scriptures and the concurrence of the entire congregation, Monk Kalaka officially granted permission to observe *Paryushana* on the fourth instead of the fifth day of the bright half of the month of Bhadrapada.

And, as the scriptures say, "Whatever course the wise monks with few faults and many virtues adopt and cling to, that course becomes the standard for all."

Monk Kalaka and Sagarchandra

As time progressed, Monk Kalaka's *karma* matured and, consequently, his disciples became recalcitrant. Try as he might, the monk could not obtain their cooperation; all his admonishments and urgings fell upon deaf ears. After warning them in vain that if they failed to show obedience they would never attain salvation, Kalaka decided to abandon his flock.

One night, while his disciples slept, the monk departed quietly from the rest-house. While leaving he informed the gate-keeper that he was going to visit his disciple's follower, *Suri* Sagarchandra. He further instructed that should the disciples repent their behaviour and beg to know his whereabouts, the gate-keeper must reprimand them severely before divulging the information.

Kalaka travelled at an easy pace until he reached *Suri* Sagarchandra's abode. Although the latter welcomed the venerable Monk, he neglected to pay him due reverence because he failed to recognise Kalaka.

At the conclusion of a regular exposition of the scriptures, Sagarchandra sought his guest's opinion, inquiring, "How was my exposition?"

"It was excellent," Kalaka replied.

Sagarchandra asked, "Venerable Sir, will you not ask me to expound further?"

After a moment's hesitation, Kalaka responded, "Perhaps you could discuss Impermanence." Sagarchandra, disappointed, requested if he might discourse some other point—something more difficult. But to this Kalaka replied, "I do not understand difficult points." So Sagarchandra was left with no choice but to lecture on Impermanence. After some time, Kalaka took up a point in Sagarchandra's thesis and debated it to some length. Sagarchandra, awed and astonished at the depth of the monk's knowledge, was momentarily struck by the monk's resemblance to his spiritual grandfather. Nevertheless, Sagarchandra continued his discussion.

Meanwhile, Kalaka's disciples noticed their preceptor's

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absence. In great consternation, they approached the keeper of the rest-house and demanded that he tell them where the master had gone. The gate-keeper, remembering the venerable monk's orders, severely reprimanded the wayward disciples, saying, "A school of monks that is without reminders is devoid of the group of choice virtues. When a school forsakes the regulations, then it must itself be forsaken by its master according to scriptural injunction." Hearing this, the disciples were genuinely repentant and the gate-keeper then directed them to their master's refuge and the company of monks proceeded to Sagarchandra's abode. || Fig. 12 ||

En route, in answer to lay people's questions, they replied, "This is the retinue of *Suri* Kalaka." Sagarchandra learnt of the company's approach and asked Kalaka, "Venerable Sir, could this be my spiritual grandfather coming?" Kalaka replied that he had heard that this was so.

When the company of disciples arrived, Sagarchandra arose deferentially to greet them. He was asked to regain his seat and told that the master had preceded them. Sagarchandra, puzzled, said, "No one has come here but an old disputatious monk." At that moment Kalaka entered and the company rose to pay obeisance to him. Sagarchandra, filled with remorse, knelt down and begged the monk's pardon. || Fig. 9 ||

Kalaka assuaged the feelings of his spiritual grandson by saying, "Do not be distressed." Then, to enlighten him, the monk took a measure, filled it with sand and poured it out. He scooped it up again and poured it out. He repeated the process until the measure was only partly full. Then, since Sagarchandra could not comprehend the analogy, Kalaka explained that "like this measure, Lord Mahavira's disciple Sudharma's knowledge of the scriptures was full and perfect. In comparison, Sudharma's disciple Jambusvamin's knowledge was less complete and his successor's even less so. Thus, by degrees knowledge of the scriptures has continued to diminish, and in this *dushama* age has lost its excellence. Therefore take no pride in scriptural knowledge as it exists in this age. No one should take pride thinking—I alone am wise here."

Thus the monk Kalaka wandered about accompanied by obedient disciples.

Kalaka Expounds the Doctrine of *Nigoda* to Shakra

Shakra, the king of the gods, luminous of body, clothed in spotless garments, decked in floral garlands and ornaments of pearl and gold, wearing a diadem studded with radiant gems, was seated on a splendid throne in the midst of the three assemblies in the Saudharana heavens—the highest heavens of the gods. Through his clairvoyant knowledge he observed the Jina, Lord Simandhara, seated in his *samavasarana*. He arose and, from where he was, worshipped the Exalted One. Shakra then descended to the Purvavideha region of the Jain universe. He sat in the *samavasarana* and heard the Jina's discourse on the subject of *Nigoda* creatures. The king of the gods, with hands folded in veneration, respectfully enquired of Jina Simandhara, "Oh Lord, is there at present, in the land of Bharatavarsha in this degenerate *dushama* age, anyone capable of presenting a lucid exposition on the *Nigoda* doctrine?"

The Jina assured the king of the gods that Monk Kalaka who resided in Bharatavarsha could, even in this age, explain the doctrine with great clarity.

Shakra, the wielder of the thunderbolt, after hearing this, assumed the form of an aged Brahman. He then went to Monk Kalaka and requested him to expound on the concept of *Nigoda* creatures.

The chief of the sages, Kalakacharya, in his deep and sonorous voice, proceeded to elucidate the doctrine in great detail. Shakra, in order to test the knowledge of the monk said, "On account of my great age I wish to end my life by starvation. Please tell me how much life still remains for me."

The learned monk attentively examined the life-span of the Brahman and was able to see by means of his scriptural knowledge that the Brahman's life stretched into days, fortnights, months, years—centuries. Kalaka instantly recognised that the person in front of him was none other than Shakra—the king of the gods—and said so. Shakra immediately discarded the form of the Brahman and assumed his true identity. || Fig. 8 ||

Shakra bowed in deference to the great *muni*. He praised him for preserving the *Nigoda* doctrine in this *dushama* age. The lord of the gods, after extolling the many virtues of the monk as well as expressing admiration for his endless wisdom, rose to the skies and returned to the Saudharana heavens.

Kalakacharya, aware that his own life was nearing its end, took the vow of non-eating and, by exercising the rite of starvation, went to heaven. Thus ends the tale of Kalakacharya.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Kalakacharya-Katha; paper; executed in 1366 A.D. at Yoginipur (Delhi); Western Indian Style (Gujarat and Rajasthan): Fig. 1

Kalpa-Sutra and *Kalakacharya-Katha;* paper; 1444 A.D.; Western Indian Style (Gujarat and Rajasthan): Fig. 2

Devasano Pado Kalpa-Sutra and *Kalakacharya-Katha;* paper; *c.* 1475-1500 A.D.; Western Indian Style (Gujarat and Rajasthan): Fig. 3

Kalakacharya-Katha; paper; executed in 1414 A.D.; Western Indian Style (Gujarat and Rajasthan): Figs. 4, 5, 9, 10

Kalpa-Sutra and *Kalakacharya-Katha;* paper; *c.* 1400 A.D.; Western Indian Style (Gujarat and Rajasthan): Fig. 6

Kalpa-Sutra and *Kalakacharya-Katha;* paper; *c.* 1500 A.D.; Western Indian Style (Gujarat and Rajasthan): Fig. 7

Kalakacharya-Katha; paper; *c.* 1450-1475 A.D.; central or eastern India; Western Indian Style (Gujarat and Rajasthan): Fig. 8

Kalpa-Sutra and *Kalakacharya-Katha;* paper; *c.* 1375-1400 A.D.; Western Indian Style (Gujarat and Rajasthan): Figs. 11, 12

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Yashodhara-Charita

The Jain religious tradition contains innumerable legends and tales known as *dharmakathas* which belong to the non-canonical strata of Jain teachings. These texts were originally compiled by monks and poets to elucidate sacred beliefs and religious injunctions. Composed in plain prose, simple verse or a combination of both, these *dharmakathas* served to instruct and edify the common man as well as reinforce Jain moral values.

Among the *dharmakathas,* the story of King Yashodhara has gained immense popularity with all Jain sects. An ancient tale, it has, as its central theme, the first tenet of Jainism: restraint from causing injury to others. The narrative places great emphasis on the dictum of *ahimsa parmo dharma* not only in terms of action but also in terms of thought; for, the Jains believe that committing violence in thought is only a shade less sinful than the deed itself: the act is implicit in the intent. Impiety of mind results in the accumulation of bad *karma,* the consequences of which have to be borne by the soul.

The theme of the *Yashodhara-Charita* has received much attention from Jain writers and, in the last two thousand years, more than twenty-five renowned authors have each reproduced a version of it. Among the composers of this tale are such eminent literary figures as Haribhadra *Suri* (8th century) from the Shevtambara sect and Vadiraja (10th century), Pushpadanta (10th century) and Raidhu (15th century) from the Digambara sect. The story has been recreated in several different languages, as evidenced by the existing renditions found in Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhramsha, as well as in Old Gujarati, Old Hindi, Old Tamil and Old Kannada. Of all these compositions, that of Haribhadra *Suri* seems to be the earliest in date, appearing under the title of *Samaraichcha-Kaha.*

The story has also been treated in Somadeva *Suri's Yashasatilaka.* Generally, the title of the Sanskrit works is *Yashodhara-Charita* while the story in Apabhramsha texts is presented under the name of *Jasahara-Chariyu.* It is not unusual to find that the various textual reproductions differ from one another in detail as well as in length.

The narration of *Yashodhara-Charita,* unlike the *Adi-Purana,* does not adopt the dialogue technique. It employs instead the other commonly prevalent device in Indian literature – that of a story within a story. Being a *dharmakatha,* the narrative contains judiciously interspersed religious instructions throughout the plot. Chance occurrences or circumstances such as the appearance of a special individual or object, or perhaps the discourse of a monk, forcibly remind the chief character to turn towards the spiritual mode of existence. Like most stories in Jain literature, this tale traces the experiences of the central figure as he whirls indefinitely through the Cycle of Rebirth, moving from one existence to the next. During the course of reincarnation, the destiny of the character often takes a strange turn. For example, in the poet Pushpadanta's version of this story, King Yashodhara is first reborn as a peacock, then as a snake and next as a fish. The fish is caught and brought to the palace of King Yashomati, who happens to be Yashodhara's son from a previous birth. Yashomati orders the fish to be taken to the royal kitchens and served in a feast to the Brahmans at the *shraddha* ceremony held in memory of his father, Yashodhara. Thus, Yashodhara, in this birth, is served as food at a feast which is held in honour of his previous incarnation – that of King Yashodhara. Later, Yashodhara is reborn as Abhayaruchi, son of Yashomati. In brief, Yashodhara eventually becomes his own grandson. These bizarre twists of fate are common to Jain legends of this genre.

Even though the story of Yashodhara is common to the Shvetambara as well as the Digambara traditions,

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illustrated manuscripts of this legend occur only among the Digambara Jains. Strangely enough, the Shvetambara Jains never found the need to embellish this text with pictures. And, interestingly, of the various themes that the Digambara Jains chose to illustrate, this particular sermon on non-violence was certainly the most favoured; it predominated all others. Most of these illustrated texts were produced in Rajasthan and Gujarat.

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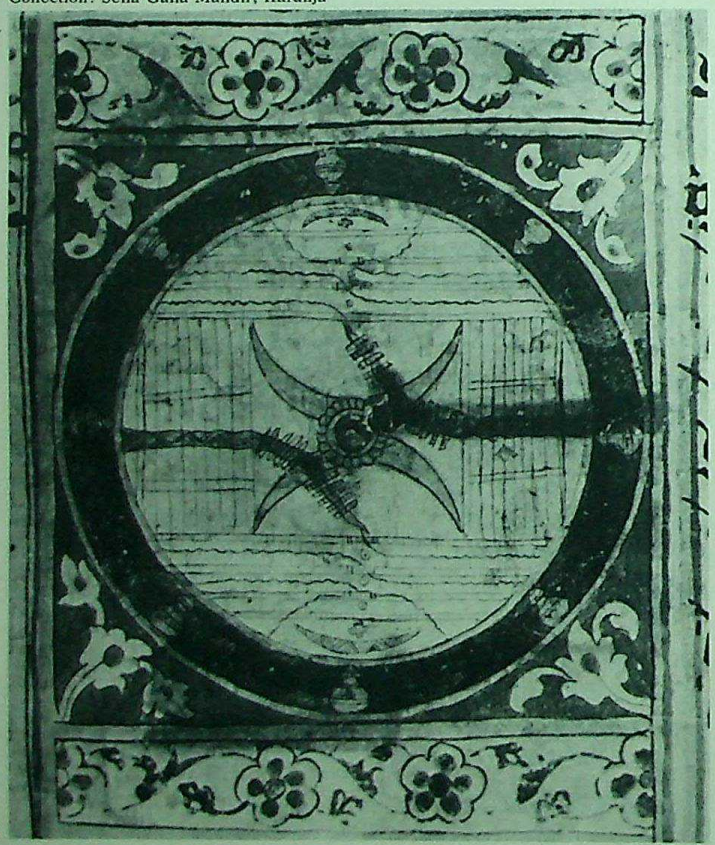

1

The Text

There lived in the land of Bharatavarsha, a king named Maridatta who ruled over the prosperous and beautiful region of Yaudeha. The capital of his kingdom was the city of Rajapura. || Fig. 2 ||

One day, a *kapalika* priest named Bhairavananda arrived in this city. He wandered about seeking alms and gathering followers. People flocked to Bhairavananda because he claimed to possess superhuman powers such as seeing events in the past, present and future, checking the movements of the stars and the moon as well as knowing the secret of perpetual youth.

The news of Bhairavananda's prowess soon reached King Maridatta, and he sent a message to the priest requesting him to grace the palace with his presence. Bhairavananda graciously accepted the royal invitation and the king received him with due respect and ceremony. || Fig. 3 ||

In the course of his conversation with Bhairavananda, the king enquired if it was possible to move in the sky and, upon receiving an affirmative answer from Bhairavananda, humbly requested that such powers be conferred upon him. The *kapalika* priest informed Maridatta that in order to acquire the ability of moving in the air, the king would have to propitiate Goddess Chandamari with sacrificial offerings of a male and female of every living species. The king immediately issued orders to his men to make the necessary arrangements for the performance of such a sacrifice. On the day of the ritual, pairs of living beings were assembled in Goddess Chandamari's temple. The *kapalika* priest was about to begin the sacrificial ritual when he noticed that among the pairs represented, that of the human species was absent. The king, forthwith, dispatched his men in search of a human pair.

The Arrival of the Jain Monks

At that time, there arrived in Rajapura, the Jain monk, Sudatta, with his *sangha.* The *sangha* camped outside the city in a beautiful park but soon found the place unsuitable as the townfolk came there to play or to indulge in amorous activities. Monk Sudatta and his *sangha* moved away from these distractions to the quiet of the cremation grounds. || Fig. 4 ||

In Monk Sudatta's *sangha* were two *kshullakas* a youngster named Abhayaruchi and his twin sister, Abhayamati. They sought and obtained permission from Sudatta to seek alms in the city. There, Maridatta's soldiers chanced upon them and apprehended them. They were then taken to Devi Chandamari's temple as the human pair for the sacrifice. || Fig. 5 ||

When the two acolytes were ushered into the temple, they blessed King Maridatta in grave and measured tones. Their cultured deportment and manner of speech impressed the king and he asked them where they came from, whether they were of royal birth and their reason for accepting ascetic vows at such a tender age. Abhayaruchi responded that the narrative of his life would be wasted on the impious people gathered there. The king, thereupon, ordered all activity and noise to cease and urged the boy to tell his story. The *kshullaka* then recounted the story of King Yashodhara.

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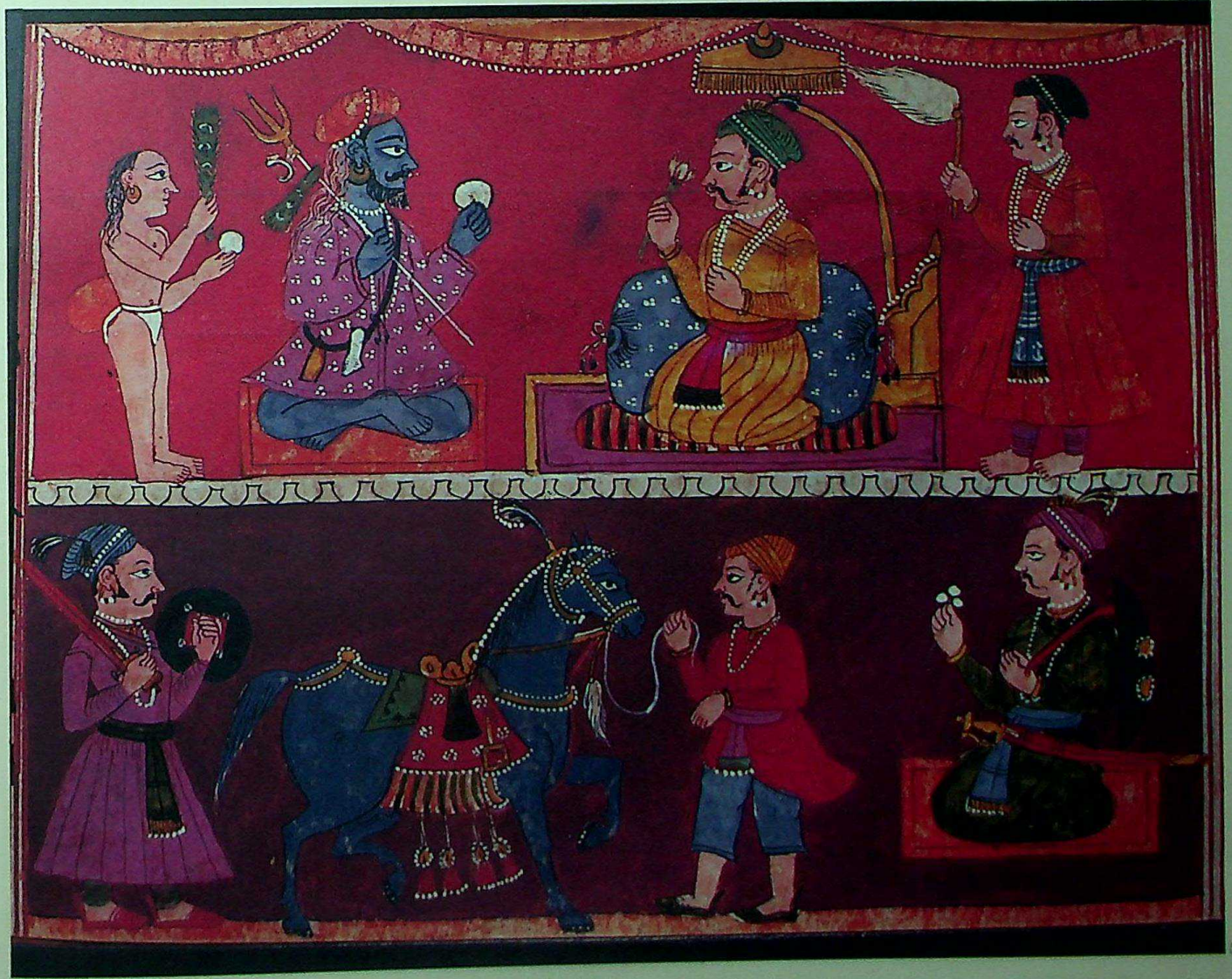

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The Story of Yashodhara

"In the land of Avanti, of which Ujjaini is the capital, there ruled a king named Yashorha. He was married to Princess Chandramati, the daughter of King Ajitanga, who bore him a son named Yashodhara. I was that Prince Yashodhara in one of my previous births," said *Kshullaka* Abhayaruchi.

"One day, when occupied with his toilet, King Yashorha spied a grey hair on his head and concluded that the time had come for him to renounce worldly attachments and spend the rest of his days in search of spiritual peace. He announced his decision to his queens and his courtiers and, after appointing his son, Prince Yashodhara, as his successor, left his palace to lead the life of an ascetic. || Fig. 6 ||

"Yashodhara, trained in all the princely arts and occupations, assumed the responsibilities associated with the office of kingship. However, he found the affairs of state irksome and preferred to spend his time in the harem with his many queens, lost in the world of sensual pleasures.

"One day while Yashodhara's favourite queen, Amritmati, lounged in her pavilion, she heard the most sweet and melodious singing. She found it irresistible and sent her maid to find out who the singer was. The maid returned with the news that the singer was an ugly deformed elephant-keeper. But the queen did not find him revolting. She became infatuated with the singer and his singing and began to visit him at night. || Fig. 7 ||

"One evening, King Yashodhara went to the pavilion of Queen Amritmati. Later that night, Yashodhara was awakened as Amritmati gently disengaged herself from his embrace. The king saw her rise, deck herself in costly clothes and ornaments, and silently tip-toe out of the room. Perplexed by the queen's behaviour, Yashodhara picked up his sword and followed her as she hurried towards the royal stables. There, the king was amazed to observe his wife throw herself at the feet of a deformed hunchbacked elephant-keeper. It became apparent to Yashodhara that the hunchback was the queen's paramour and was angry at having been kept waiting. Queen Amritmati tried to appease the hunchback by pressing his feet and apologising profusely for being late, but to no avail. The hunchback pulled her by her hair and upbraided her while beating her severely with a stick. || Fig. 8 ||

"Surprisingly enough, Amritmati not only accepted the humiliation without protest, but also declared that she had been helpless and assured her lover that she would be happy if her husband were dead. In fact, she said that she would pray to the mighty goddess for her husband's death. When the king heard these words he was filled with fury and was

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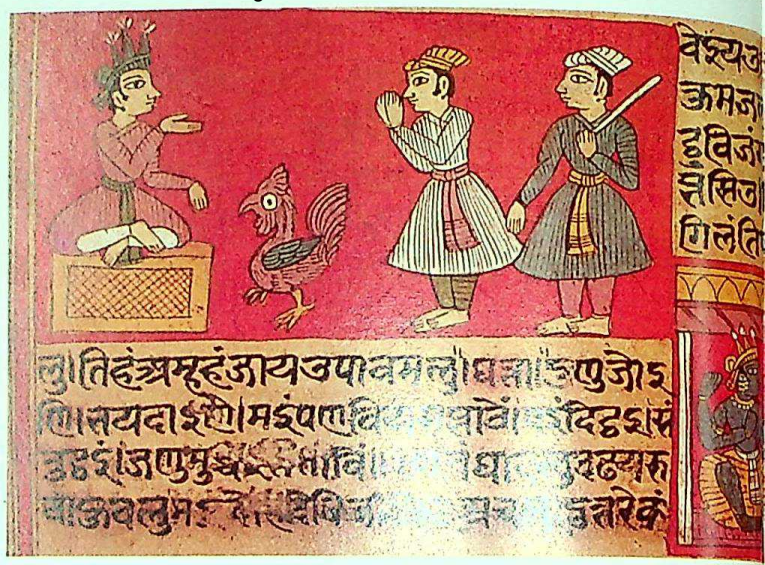

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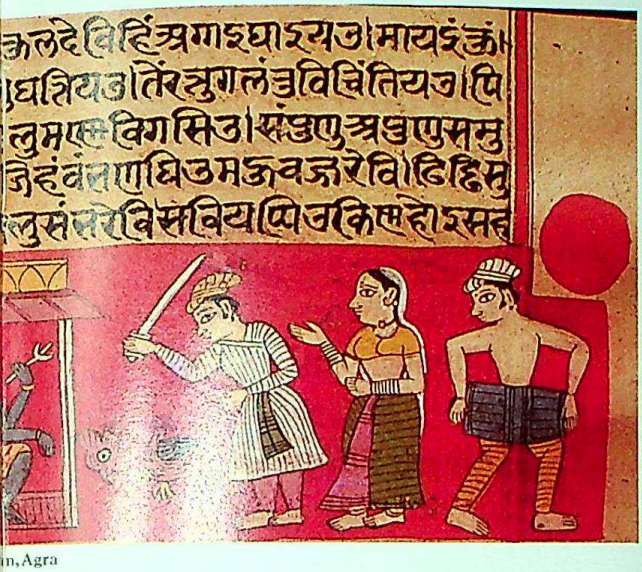

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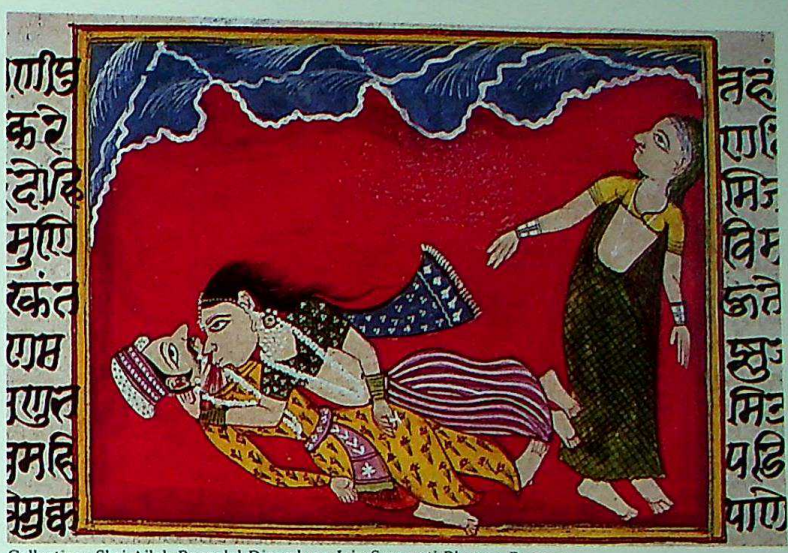

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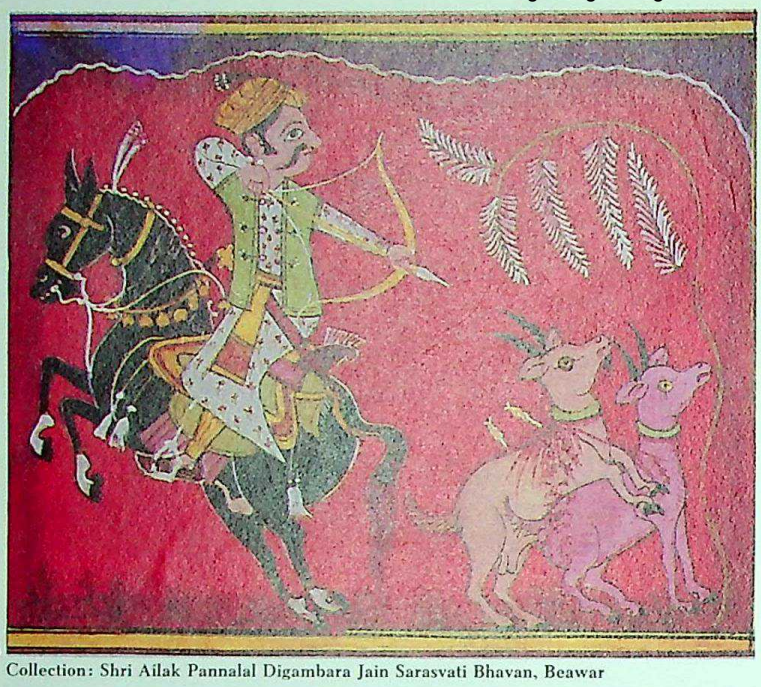

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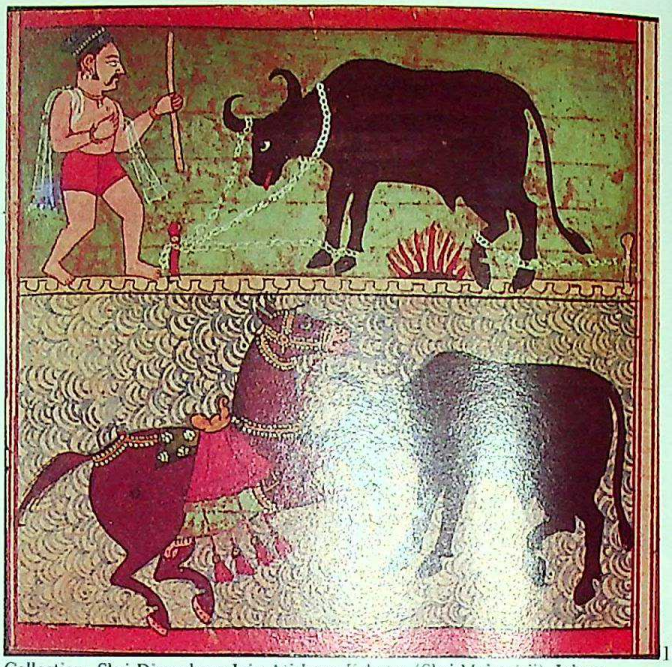

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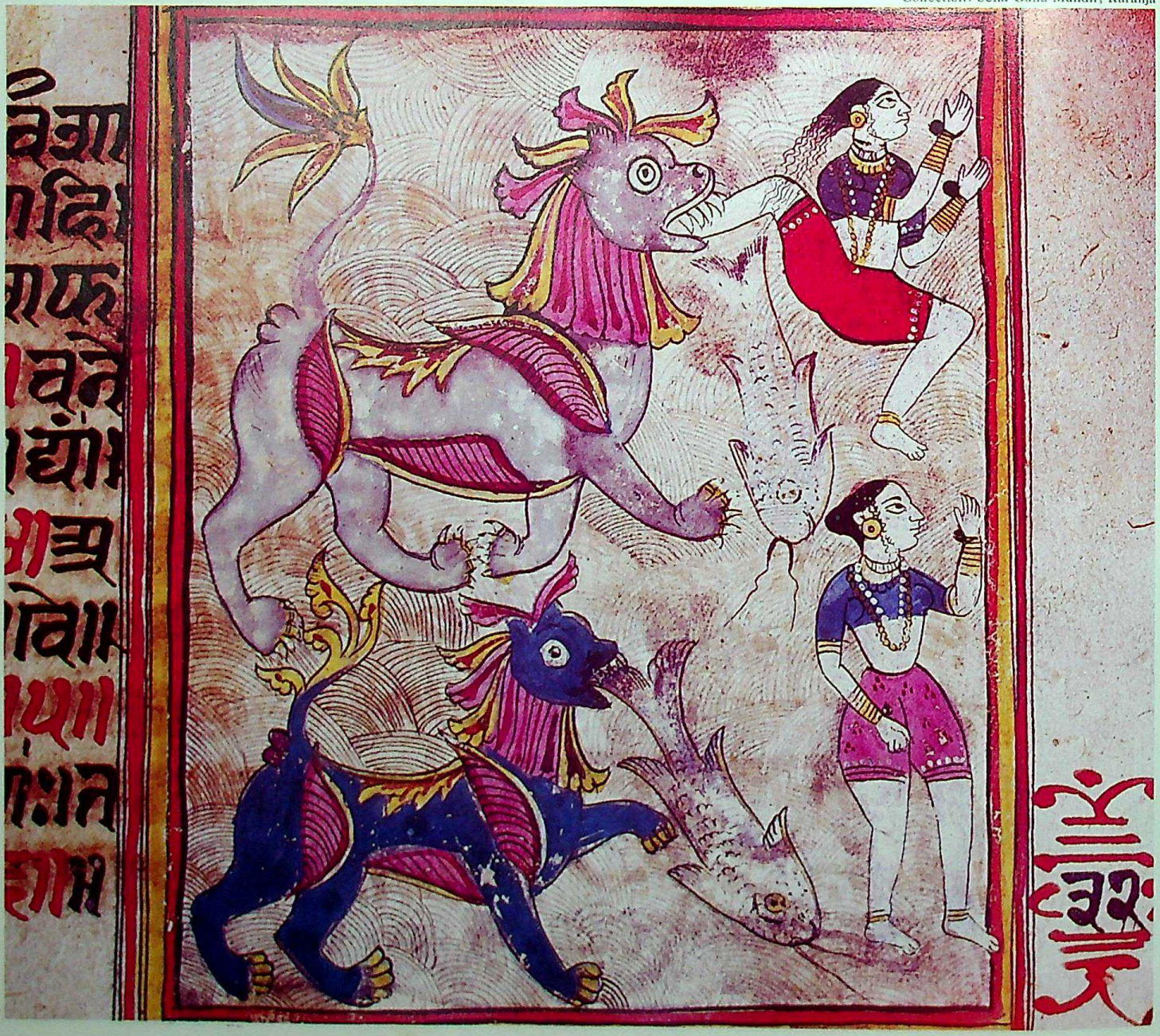

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at the point of killing Amritmati and her lover with his sword, when it occurred to him that it would be demeaning to deal with such base creatures. Exercising great restraint over his actions and emotions, he returned to Amritmati's pavilion. In the early hours of the morning, the queen stole into her pavilion and crept into her bed unaware that her husband had seen her with her lover. || Fig. 8 ||

"King Yashodhara was very disturbed at the events that had transpired the night before. He tried to forget what had occurred by occupying himself with his royal duties, but neither the administration of the state nor the entertainment provided by singers and dancers succeeded in calming the turmoil within him. || Fig. 18 ||

"In despair, he approached his mother, Chandramati, and professed that he wished to die on account of a bad dream. He struck himself with his sword, but his mother prevented him from killing himself and promised to counteract the effects of the evil dream by propitiating Goddess Chandamari with the sacrifice of a cock. Yashodhara refused to associate himself with any form of sacrifice which involved violence, but gave in to his mother's entreaties when she proposed that the sacrifice to the goddess could consist of a cock made of flour instead of a live bird. King Yashodhara and Queen Chandramati went to the temple and offered a bird fashioned out of flour, and the sacrificial offering was consumed by all as though it were the flesh of a cock. || Fig. 9 ||

"Upon returning to the palace, Yashodhara could not rid himself of a sense of revulsion and despondency. He decided to hand over the reins of the kingdom to his son, Yashomati, and embark upon a quest for spiritual peace. Queen Amritmati appeared disconsolate when she heard the king's resolve. She urged her husband and his mother to come to her pavilion and partake of a feast which she had arranged in their honour, saying that she too wished to leave the palace with its comforts and accompany her husband to the forest. Deceived by the queen's sweet words and chaste behaviour, Yashodhara assented. Amritmati, however, had evil designs and she served poisoned food to Yashodhara and Chandramati. The latter died instantly while Yashodhara fell on the ground writhing in agony from the effects of the poison. Amritmati threw herself at Yashodhara, wailing as if in great grief, and while clinging to Yashodhara, strangled him to death. || Fig. 10 ||

"Yashodhara's son, Yashomati, sorrowfully performed the funeral rites with the pious intention that his father and grandmother be happy in their future existences. However, Yashodhara and Chandramati had sinned by offering a sacrifice, even though it was not of a live cock but an imitation in flour. As a result of this sin, they had to undergo several rebirths.

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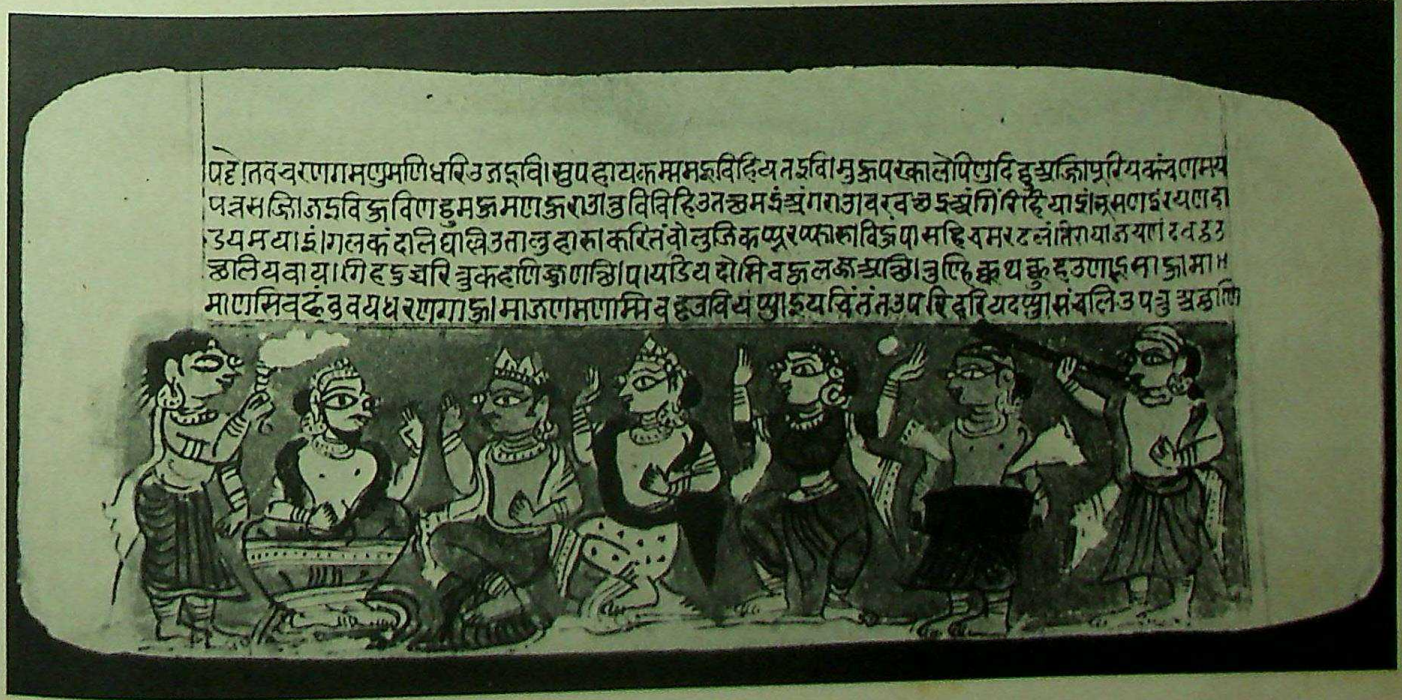

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Effects of Sin

"In his first rebirth, Yashodhara was born in a forest as a peacock. One day, while the little peacock and its mother were out looking for food, they were ensnared by a hunter. The hunter killed the mother but took the young peacock home. His wife took great care of the little peacock. || Figs. 11,12 ||

"Yashodhara grew into a handsome bird and the hunter, considering it to be a gift fit for a king, presented the peacock to Yashomati who, ironically, was none other than Yashodhara's son. The peacock was kept as a pet in the palace. Meanwhile, Yashodhara's mother, Chandramati, was reborn as a dog in Yashomati's palace. One day, while the peacock was strutting around in the palace grounds, it spied Queen Amritmati with her hunchback lover. Recalling its past birth, the peacock attacked them in anger. The queen, in defence, hurled her girdle at the peacock and broke its leg. As the palace maids chased after the limping bird, the dog, who was Chandramati in its former birth, came and killed it. Just then, King Yashomati happened to pass by, and, in a fit of rage, slew the dog for having killed the peacock. || Fig. 13 ||

"In their next rebirths, Yashodhara appeared as a snake and Chandramati as a porcupine. Both met their deaths in the forest, when the porcupine killed the snake and was, in turn, killed by a large animal. || Fig. 14 ||

"In their third rebirths, Yashodhara was born as a large fish and Chandramati as a crocodile in the River Shipra. Often, the maids from the palace came to bathe in the river. Once, while the crocodile chased the fish, one of the palace maids inadvertently came in the way and the crocodile caught her by the leg and dragged her down. || Fig. 17 ||

"King Yashomati heard about this episode and he ordered the fishermen to cast a net into the waters to catch the crocodile and kill it. The fish was also caught in the net and taken to the royal kitchen where it was cooked and served to the king.

"In the fourth round of rebirths, Chandramati was born as a wild goat and Yashodhara as her male offspring. The kid matured into a magnificent beast and while he was in the process of mating with Chandramati, he was killed by a hunter. || Fig. 15 ||

"Yashodhara's soul then took the form of an embryo in the womb of Chandramati. Chandramati was brought to King Yashomati's palace to be slaughtered for a feast arranged for the *shraddha* ceremony of the king's father, the late King Yashodhara. When the goat was slain, the baby goat was found alive in her womb and was reared by the palace servants. Queen Amritmati, then deformed and suffering from leprosy on account of her wicked deeds, saw the little goat and ordered it to be roasted alive for her to eat.

"Chandramati's soul, in the meanwhile, had become reincarnated as a buffalo. Once, while the buffalo wallowed in the limpid waters of a pond, a horse came down to quench its thirst. This led to a fight between the horse and the buffalo in which the buffalo gored the horse to death. The owner of the horse complained about this to the king who ordered that the buffalo be roasted alive. || Fig. 16 ||

"In their sixth rebirths, Yashodhara was born as a cock and Chandramati as a hen. They were raised with much affection by a Bhil woman and their rare beauty induced their owner to present them to King Yashomati. The king accepted the gift and put the birds in charge of the palace game-keeper. || Fig. 19 ||

"One day, King Yashomati went in a procession with his beloved queen, Kusumavalli, to the woods to celebrate the Spring Festival. The game-keeper was attending to the birds in the garden of the royal forest lodge when a Jain monk came by and proceeded to give a discourse on Jain beliefs. The monk's teachings not only induced the game-keeper to convert to Jainism but caused the birds to recall their past lives and they began to crow pathetically. Their cries disturbed the king's amorous dalliance with his queen and, in anger, he shot them with his arrow. || Fig. 20 ||

"The souls of these birds passed into the womb of Queen Kusumavalli to be born as twins – a boy named Abhayaruchi and a girl named Abhayamati.

"One day, King Yashomati, in the course of his royal duties, proceeded on a hunting expedition. On his way to the forest, he passed a Jain monk named Sudatta. The king failed to find any game that day and, was returning empty-handed that evening, when he again encountered Monk Sudatta. On seeing him, Yashomati concluded that the monk had been the ill-omen which had prevented him from making a kill. In fury, the king set his dogs on the monk, but, when they came near him, they stood still with their heads bent. || Figs. 21,22 ||

"The king, in agitation, charged at Monk Sudatta with his sword, but was restrained by a merchant devotee. The merchant informed King Yashomati that Monk Sudatta was none other than the King of Kalinga who had renounced his kingdom to atone for the sin of punishing an innocent person. King Yashomati was profoundly affected by this incident and bowed in reverence to Monk Sudatta. In repentance, Yashomati considered cutting off his own head to expiate his sins. But his thoughts were interrupted by the monk, who adivised him not to act rashly. Wonderstruck by the monk's ability to read a man's mind, the king implored him to tell him where his father, mother and grandmother were at that moment. The monk informed him that his father

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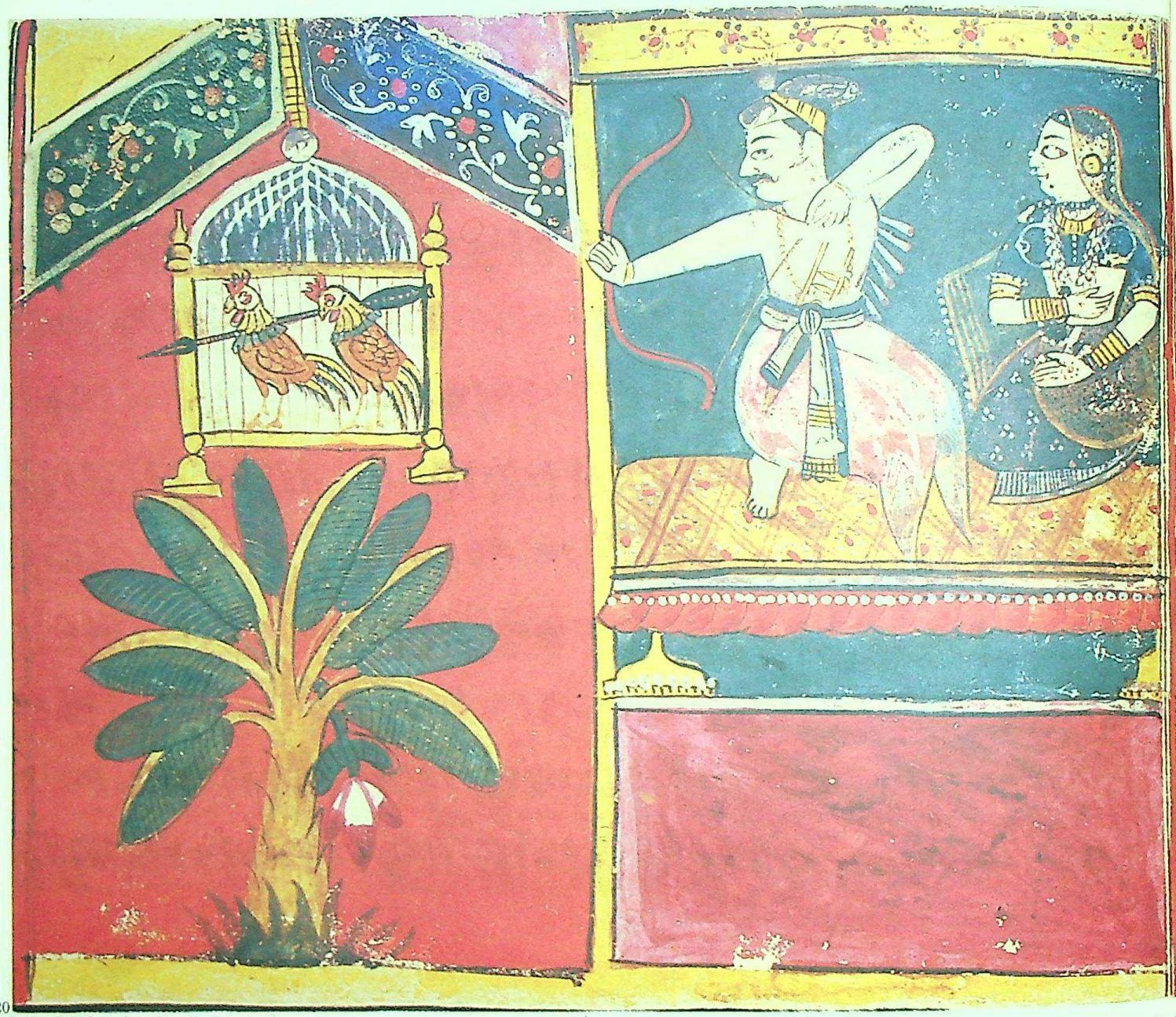

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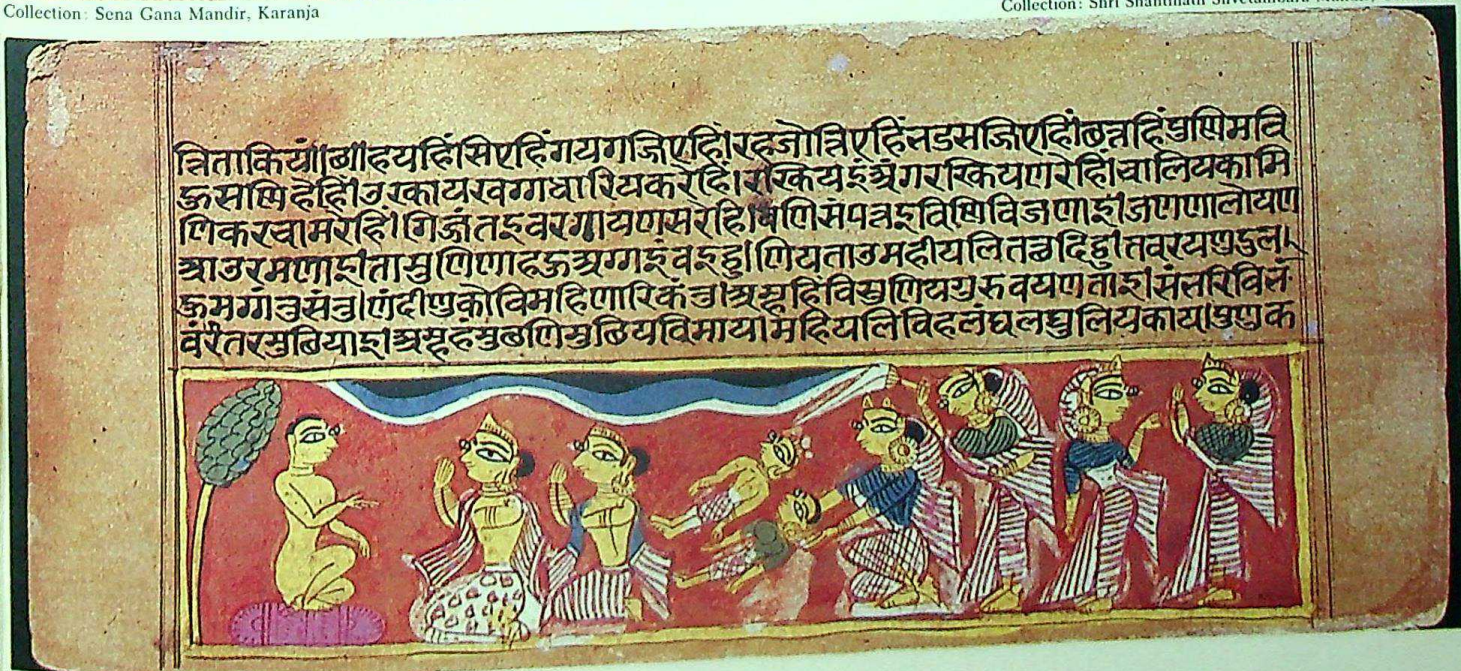

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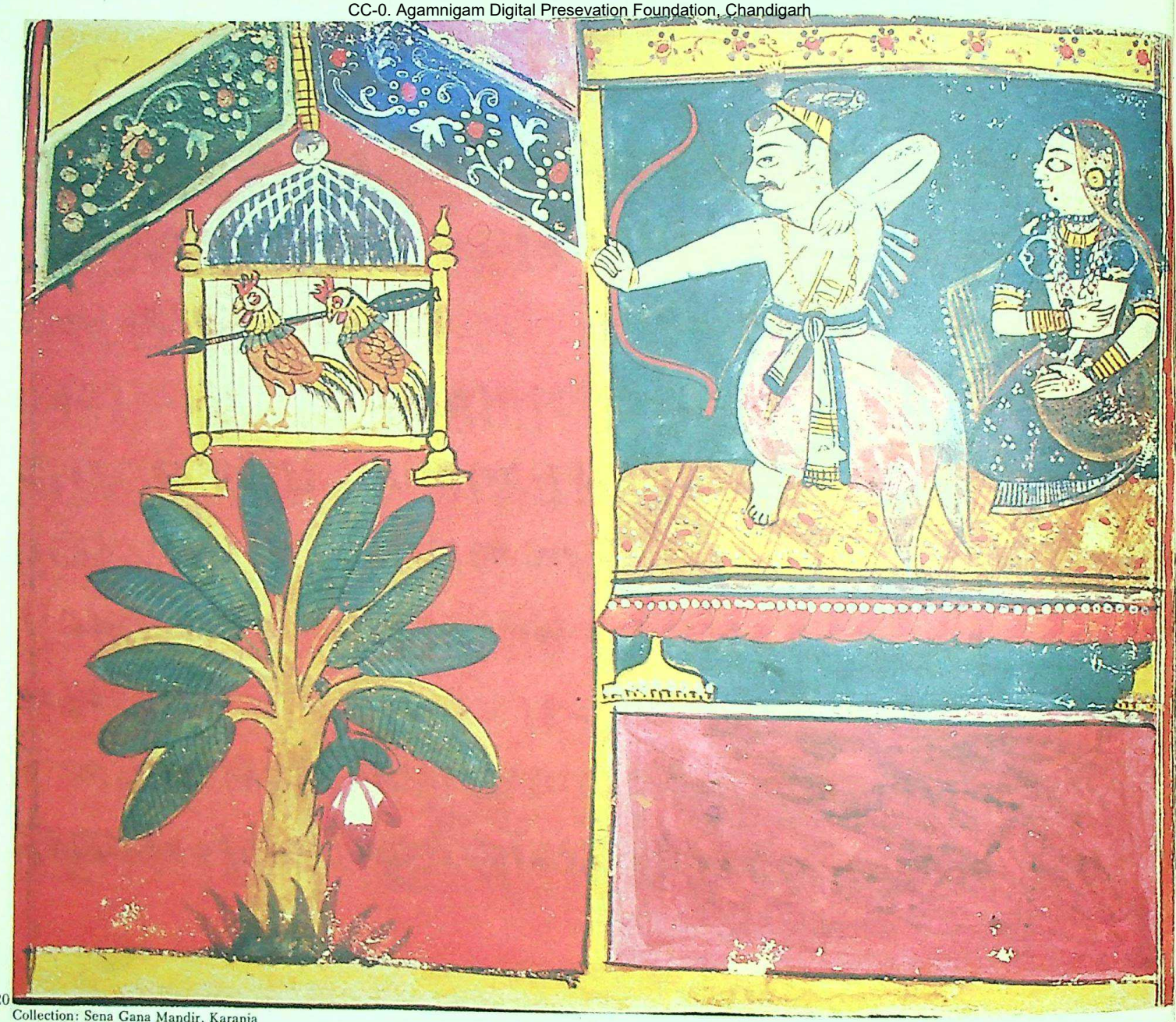

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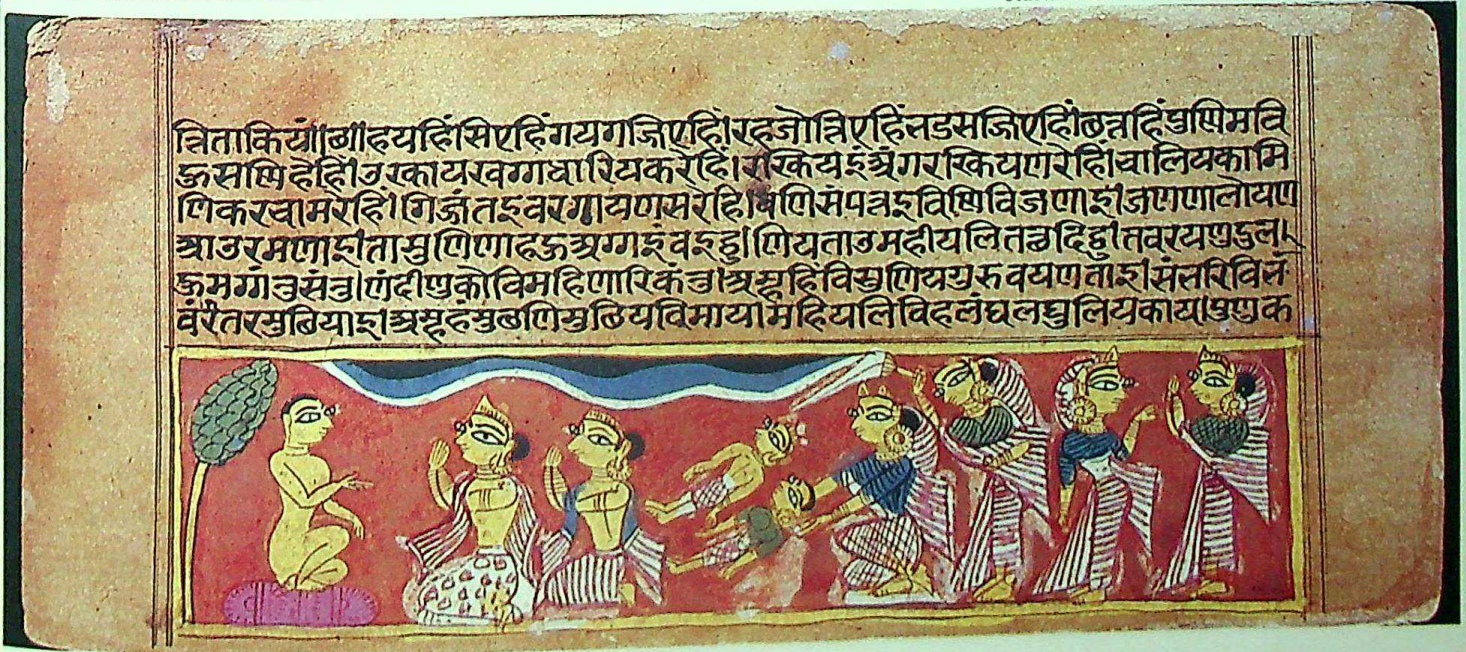

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and grandmother were born as his own children, the twins Abhayaruchi and Abhayamati, while his mother was suffering in the fifth hell on account of her vicious ways.

"King Yashomati was so overcome with emotion upon hearing this revelation that he decided to renounce worldly joys and become a homeless mendicant, despite the gentle attempts of his many wives to persuade him to remain with them.

"When we heard Monk Sudatta, my sister and I recalled our former existences and fainted. When we regained consciousness we also expressed the desire to take vows of renunciation but Monk Sudatta, in consideration of our youth, advised us to join the religious order as acolytes. || Fig. 23 ||

"And while seeking alms in this city," Abhayaruchi concluded, "Abhayamati and I were apprehended by your soldiers and brought here to this temple."

Maridatta's Remorse

King Maridatta was deeply affected by Abhayaruchi's narrative and reflected on the grossness of his own act. Seeing himself surrounded by animals brought for sacrifice, he was filled with remorse. Bhairavananda, too, became disenchanted with his mode of worship. Both he and King Maridatta decided to abandon their former ways and follow the path of gentleness and non-violence towards all living beings.They took the vows applicable to a Jain mendicant and, pulling out their hair, became disciples of Monk Sudatta. || Fig. 24 ||

ILLUSTRATIONS

Jambudvipa; Yashodhara-Charita; paper; executed in 1636 A.D. at Idar; School of Gujarat: Fig. 1

Yashodhara-Charita; paper; *c.* 1700 A.D.; probably Sirohi; School of Rajasthan: Figs. 2, 3, 16

Yashodhara-Charita; paper; executed in 1494 A.D.; probably Sojitra; School of Gujarat: Figs. 4, 5, 7, 14

Yashodhara-Charita; paper; executed in 1712 A.D. at Ahmedabad; School of Gujarat: Figs. 6, 10, 15

Yashodhara-Charita; paper; executed in 1731 A.D. at Bundi; School of Bundi: Fig. 8

Yashodhara-Charita; paper; executed in 1636 A.D. at Jobner (near Ajmer); School of Rajasthan: Fig. 9

Yashodhara-Charita; paper; executed in 1636 A.D. at Idar; School of Gujarat: Figs. 11, 17, 20, 22, 24

Yashodhara-Charita; paper; *c.* 1440-1460 A.D.; Western Indian Style (Delhi-Gwalior): Figs. 12, 18

Yashodhara-Charita; paper; executed in 1593 A.D. at Amer; School of Rajasthan: Fig. 13

Yashodhara-Charita; paper; executed in 1596 A.D.; probably Idar; School of Gujarat: Figs. 19, 21

Yashodhara-Charita; paper; executed in 1454 A.D.; probably Gwalior; Western Indian Style (Delhi-Gwalior): Fig. 23

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Glossary

ahimsa: non-harming
ajiva: insentient
anekantavada: the doctrine of manifold aspects
anga: a group of twelve Jain canonical texts
anuvrata: minor vow pertaining only to laypeople
aparigraha: non-possession
arhata: one who has attained omniscience
artha: import; meaning of a word
arthashastra: martial arts
ashraya: karmic influx
ashta: eight
asi: government
ashtapratihara: eight attributes of Tirthankara when he attains omniscience
asteya: non-stealing
asura: demon
atpati: a type of turban
avadhi-jnana: clairvoyant knowledge
avasarpini: regressive half-cycle
bandha: karmic bondage
bhattaraka: a class of Jain pontiffs
brahmacharya: celibacy
chakdar jama: a *jama* with pointed ends
chakra-ratna: one of the fourteen attributes of a *chakravartin*
chakravartin: universal monarch
charma: one of the fourteen attributes of a *chakravartin*
chaturyama dharma: the law of four restraints; Parshva's religion
chauri: a yak-tail fan
chetana: consciousness
choli: blouse
devadushya: divine cloth
dharmakatha: religious legend
dhoti: unstitched lower garment worn by men
dhulishala: outer wall of a *samavasarana* made of crushed gems
Digambara: sky-clad; Jain sect whose monks practice ascetic nudity
dikkakumari: celestial maiden
diksha: formal initiation into ascetic order
divyadhvani: miraculous sound

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drishti-yuddha: staring contest
dvipa: island
gana: a unit of monks
ganadhara: the chief of a unit of monks
gandhakuti: pavilion for Tirthankara in *samavasarana*
ganin: leader of the order
garbha: conception
gunasthana: the fourteen stages of purification
jala-yuddha: a fight in water
jama: overshirt
janma: birth
Jina: spiritual victor; a synonym for Tirthankara
jinakalpin: a monk whose conduct is modelled upon that of Mahavira
jiva: soul; sentient
jyotiranga kalpavriksha: celestial wish-fulfilling tree radiating light
kagani: one of the fourteen attributes of a *chakravartin*
kalpa: conduct, right behaviour prescribed by rules
kalpavriksha: celestial wish-fulfilling tree
kalyanaka: auspicious moments
kapalika: Shaivite sect
karma: action, subtle matter that exists everywhere
karmabij: the seed of karma
karmanasharira: the transmigrating body of karmic matter
kashaya: passion
kayotasarga: abandonment of the body; a standing or sitting posture of meditation
kevala-jnana: omniscience; knowledge isolated from karmic obstruction
kevalin: one who attains omniscience
krishi: farming
krishnapaksha: the dark fortnight of the moon
kshatriya: member of a warrior caste
kshullaka: acolyte
kulakara: patriarch
kumbha: a boss; pot
Laukantika: gods belonging to the outermost region of the Jambudvipa
mahaparyaya-jnana: telepathic knowledge
mahavrata: the five great vows of a mendicant
makara: sea monster
malla-yuddha: wrestling contest
manus: the first law-givers
masi: writing
mati-jnana: sensory knowledge; mind-based knowledge
moksha: salvation; emancipation from the cycle of births and deaths
muni: ordained monk
naga: snake
nagari: script
nagavimana: a mansion from the netherworld
namokaramantra: the five-fold obeisance of the Jains
nandyavarta: a diagram
nayavada: the doctrine of partial expression of truths
nemi: the rim of a wagon wheel
nirgrantha: unattached, without possessions; ancient name for the Jain community
nirjara: dissociation of karmas
nirvana: release from karmic bondage; liberation
odhni: wimple
om: sacred sound formed by combining the first syllable of each word in the *namokaramantra*
paijama: loose trousers
pajjosamana: forgiveness
pajjosavana: the spending of four months of the rainy season at one place
pancha-agni tapas: five-fire penance
panchakalyanaka: the five auspicious events in the life of a Tirthankara
pani-patra: hand-bowl
papa: unwholesome karmas
Paryushana: Jain religious festival for the upliftment of the soul
pata: a painting on cloth or wood
patli: wooden book-cover
pothi: loose-leaf manuscript with a horizontal format
pudgala: gross matter
punya: wholesome karma; weal
purana: old tale narrating the life of a single individual; name of a class of sacred texts dealing with the lives of Tirthankaras
purva: an indefinite measure of time, implying many thousands of years
purva: a group of fourteen Jain canonical texts, now extinct
ratnatraya: the three jewels: right faith or insight, right knowledge, right conduct
rishabha: bull
sagaropama: an incredible period of time
sahi: person of the Shaka tribe settled in Seistan on the western bank of the River Indus
sallekhana: ritual death by fasting
samavasarana: holy assembly of the Jina
samsara: cycle of transmigration
samsarin jiva: unliberated soul
samvara: spiritual path; stoppage of karmic influx
samyag charitra: proper conduct
samyag darshana: true insight
samyag-jnana: right knowledge
sangha: community
sanksipta vachana: shorter list
satya: truth
shraddha: faithfulness
shakha: branch; school
Shakra: Indra
shastra-bhandara: temple-library
shastra-dan: religious donation of manuscripts
shilpa: handicrafts
shloka: verse
shramana: non-Vedic tradition; a non-Vedic mendicant
shri-mandapa: ceiling of the crystal enclosure in the *samavasarana*
shrivatsa: mark on divine beings resembling a crucifom flower
shruta-jnana: scriptural knowledge
shruti: the oral tradition
shudras: members of the fourth caste; touchable and untouchables serving the Kshtriyas and Vaishyas
shuklapaksha: bright fortnight of the moon
Shvetambara: white (cotton) clad; name of a Jain sect whose mendicants wear white garments
siddha: a liberated soul; a *kevalin* freed from all activities
siddha-shila: the apex of the universe
sthapati: master builder
sthavirakalpin: a monk who lives in an ecclesiastical community
sthiti-pratijya: festival honouring the birth of an heir
suri: head of a group of monks
sutra: the canonical scriptures
svastika: well-being: the stylized wheel of life
svayamvara: the ceremony where the bride chooses her groom from an assembly of invited guests
swayambuddha: enlightenment on one's own accord
syadvada: the doctrine of qualified assertion
tapas: ascetic penance; austerity
Tirthankara: the omniscient spiritual teacher of the Jains; a synonym for Jina
tirthankaranama-karma: special kind of karma which ensures that the person will be born a Tirthankara
utsarpini: progressive half-cycle
vaishya: member of the merchant caste
vanijya: commercial activities
vedaniya karma: karma responsible for mundane experience of pain and pleasure
vidya: the arts
vina: lute
vistrata vachana: longer list
yaksha: demigod
yojana: a measure of distance equal to about eight or nine miles

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